Flying Snake

A Journal of Cryptozoology, Folklore and Forteana

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Dutch Mermaids • Talking Cat • Another Falling Turtle • Strange Lepidoptera Mating Behaviour • Essex Wolf • Green Dog Craze• Haunted Bells • Spanish Lake Monsters • Ancient Chinese Coin in Wales • Buffalo Snake • Feathered Snake • Flying Snake in India • Macau Sea Monster • Mystery Hong Kong Lizard • Harems of Men • Marmite and Hair •And More!

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Payment for however many issues you (and your friendly neighbourhood flying snake) would like to purchase can be made by means of PayPal on my e-mail address. Checks and postal orders from within the U.K. (NOT abroad) should be made out to Richard Muirhead NOT Flying Snake. From issue 11 onwards I`ll be paying £3 each for submissions or the U.S. $ Equivalent. I know its not much but it`s all I can afford.

COVER shows unlikely mating between an Ailanthus silkmoth (above) and a Great memnon (below.) Thanks to Carl P. Marshall.

DR DEVOS DIARY

"For I pray God for the introduction of new creatures into this island. For I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway and silver fish of Thames." Christopher Smart `Rejoice in the Lamb`.Poet,naturalist,lunatic (1722-1771)

Well, Happy 10th Birthday Flying Snake and Happy 50th Birthday Richard in November! I must admit I am surprised and rather pleased it`s lasted this long,5 years, and I hope you select few Devotees haven`t De-evolved too much to the point you can only holler like our so called ape ancestors (give me a break!) and actually only read scratch marks on trees and the meaning of chimp poo! But seriously, I want to thank those of you who have contributed to Flying Snake and are now forever welcome in Dr Devo`s Hall of Fame along with the other bunch of eccentrics who actually bother to read this highly controversial and (in my dreams) ground breaking magazine. I hope issue 10 is worthy of flying like a flying snake through your letter box or e-mail inbox if you belong to the 21st Century. I actually had too much material intended for this issue so I must be going right somewhere. In fact I probably have enough material to reach Flying Snake # 20 ,but if Donald Trump gets elected…(Let`s not go there..!)

I also planned to offer a local cake maker £5 and a free copy of F.S.#10 in return for him/her allowing me to take a photo of a cake with 10 candles on it, which I would then put on a page here but due to pressure of time that idea was never carried through. In recent history, I have bought a few interesting books .In Manchester I found at a bargain price UFO Crash at Aztec by William Steinman. Loes Modderman sent me some very interesting books for Christmas including Animal Legends by Maurice Burton. I first seriously took advantage of the Archives for the Unexplained in Sweden where Bob Skinner and I are going in May and bought a volume of the International Society of Cryptozoology`s journal `Cryptozoology` I was missing. I also obtained the (apparently) final issue of `The Unknown`, which contained something fascinatingly Fortean about letters seen in the 1950s on the Moon. Now I know the Moon is supposed to be linked to lunacy but how mad or brave enough do you have to be to admit seeing letters on the Moon?! With that thought orbiting inside your mind I`ll leave you to read Flying Snake!

Befuddled Butterflies

Carl P Marshall

Through recent communications with colleagues from another butterfly house in Britain, we at Stratford Upon Avon Butterfly Farm have received these somewhat unexpected images of some very unusual butterfly couplings.

Images 1 show an Ailanthus silkmoth *Samia cynthia* (above) and a great memnon *Papilio memnon* (below) which is an inter-familial coupling with *S. cynthia*, a **Saturnidae** moth and *P. memnon* an Asian butterfly of the swallowtail family **Papilionidae.** (Image 1 is on the front cover of FS 10 - R).

Fig 1 below (Image 3 in Carl`s original text.)Image shows *Consul fabius* (left) and *Dryas julia* (right) - *C. fabius* of the sub-family **Charaxinae** and *D. julia* of the **Heliconiini** tribe - Both **Nymphalidae** Family.

The above coupling will likely be non viable as they are too distantly related, however a few known species only exist because of inter-specific hybridisation. Researchers found the Appalachian tiger swallowtail *Papilio appalachiensis* was actually produced about 100,000 years ago when two distinct species mated and their hybrid offspring gave rise to the Appalachian type. The researchers were surprised to discover the species parents were actually the Canadian swallowtail *P. canadensis* and the eastern tiger swallowtail *P. Glaucus.*
Hybrid speciation is often difficult to achieve, given the difficulty of finding a habitat separate from each parental species (competitive exclusion) and remaining genetically distinct from the parental species (reproduction isolation). *P. appalachiensis* achieves this by living in a separate habitat; namely the higher elevation of the Appalachian mountain range. The couplings illustrated above would most likely be nonviable as the two butterfly species are too distantly related (let alone *A. atlas* and *M. achilles,* which is an inter-familial coupling!) with both individuals belonging to separate genera found within a taxonomic family.
Stratford Upon Avon Butterfly Farm is always interested in unusual activities such as specific hybridisation and will post any further couplings brought to our attention.

Mystery Reptiles of the World

There are quite a large number of neglected cryptid lizard or snake stories, found only in the depths of newspaper archives. Over the next few pages are a selection of them I have found, I will be including unknown or very rare flying lizards.

WHERE SNAKES ABOUND.

A Curious Spot Where Thousands of Snakes Congregate.

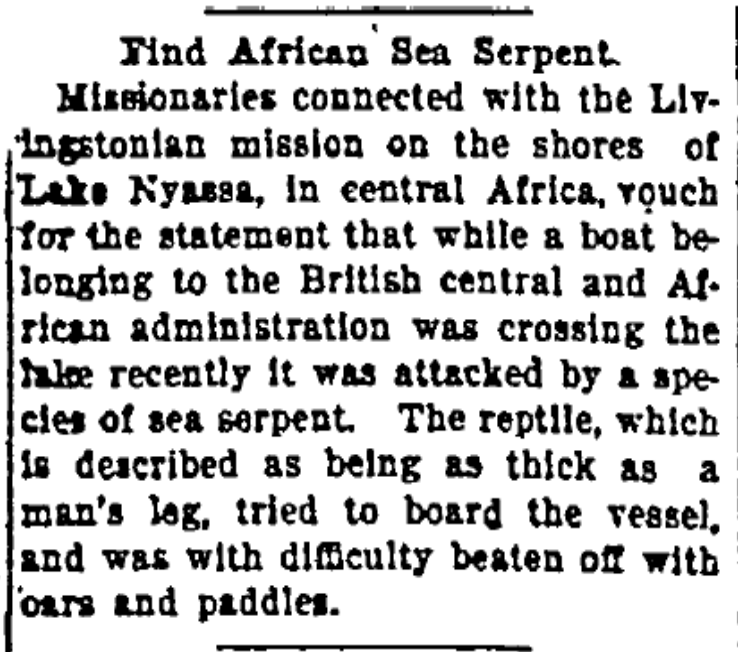
Save in the imagination of some unfortunate victim of delirium, there are few men who ever saw more than three or four snakes together in any place on the earth's surface. Were you to ask naturalists they would tell you that the tendency of snakes is not to congregate in any one place. Yet contrary to seeming laws of nature there is a place which is infested by them in astounding numbers, so vast that it is the wonder of all those who have looked upon it. This land of snakes is known by either of the two unsuggestive names of "Linkville" or "Klamath Falls," and is situated in an obscure corner over the California border line in Oregon. It may be reached in twenty-four hours' travel from San Francisco. You have only to take the northern-bound train for Ager, thence a stage line of about twenty miles conducts you to your

destination. It is impossible to associate "snakes" with the beautiful and varying scenery through which you pass as far as Klamath Hot Springs. Trees and streams and all the glories of mountain scenery greet you on every hand. You drive through a luxurious growth of evergreens and shrubbery; you cross and recross numerous streams: you breathe the soft air of Shasta and Siskiyou. But when you have left Klamath Hot Springs a few miles behind there is an appreciable difference in the landscape. Sparsity of vegetation is the first observable change. At every turn of the road the aspect becomes more barren, more forlorn and more desolate. Finally, you seek in vain for a tree or a shrub, and at last, dust-covered and weary, you pull up at a dry, withered village, that produces nothing on its hard, rocky soil but revolting snakes. You have reached Linkville, the haunting retreat of serpents!

There is a bridge in Linkville that spans Klamath river. From this bridge, which is a vantage point as far as view is concerned, a most extraordinary sight meets the eyes. Along the river banks, at irregular intervals of a few yards, are seen dark balls ranging from a foot to three feet in diameter. They are stationary and as passive as a boulder, which they resemble in color. But if a stone is hurled at any of these strange spheres, to your horror snakes will crawl off in every direction and the ball will melt away as lard melts in a frying pan. The repulsive creatures that have thus been coiled up in a perfect sphere glide away under rocks, and one minute later not a snake is to be seen in that particular spot. But the other balls of snakes in the vicinity are little disturbed by the stone. A close inspection will reveal only a moving head or twitching tail in the mass that before looked like an immovable boulder. Those that were scattered, however, may later seek the

neighbouring spheres or in a few minutes slink out of their hiding places and reassemble themselves in balls

Emporia Gazette February 21st 1899



Find African Sea Serpent.

Missionaries connected with the Livingstonian mission on the shores of Lake Nyassa, in central Africa, vouch for the statement that while a boat belonging to the British central and African administration was crossing the lake recently it was attacked by a species of sea serpent. The reptile, which is described as being as thick as a man's leg, tried to board the vessel, and was with difficulty beaten off with oars and paddles.

A SEA SERPENT IN AFRICA

Washington Bee (Washington (DC),

July 8th 1905

ARIZONA GIRL BITTEN BY LIZZARD (sic)

Tombstone Epitaph August 4th 1907

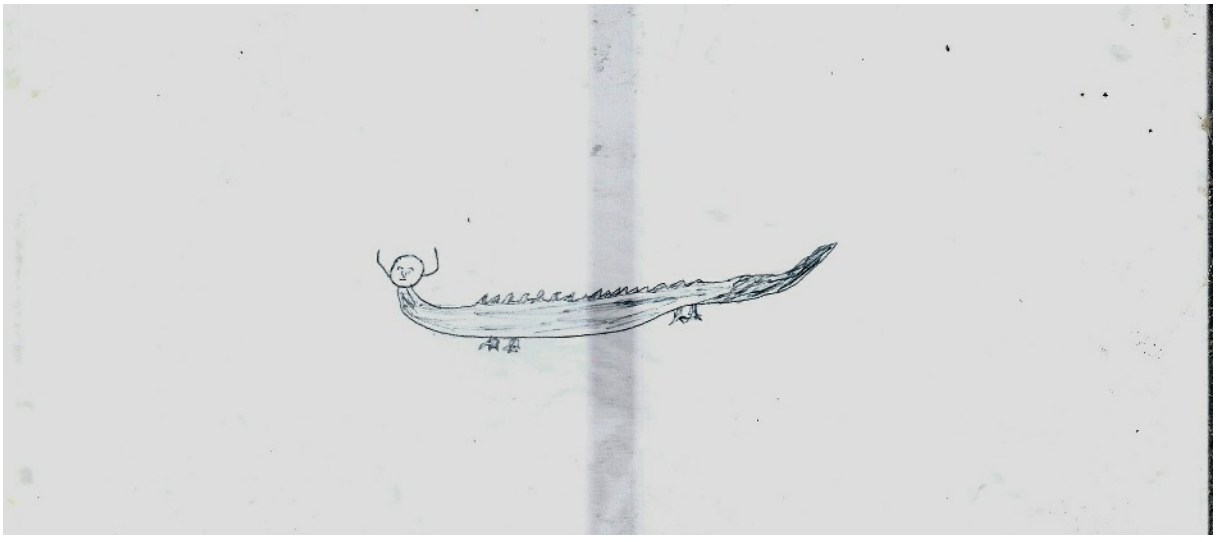
First instance of Kind Recorded - Taken to the Pasteur Institute

Word has been received from Prescott of the departure of Mrs Philip Morgan for Chicago taking her little six year old daughter to the Pasteur Institute for treatment. The child was bitten while playing a few days ago by a peculiar looking reptile of the lizard family, much larger than the ordinary lizard, and with broad yellow markings, thus distinguishing it from the Gila Monster. The wound was promptly cauterised, but inflamation continued to increase and tetanus was narrowly averted. The physicians advised Mrs Morgan to take the child at once to Chicago for treatment. So far as is known no other lizard of the same species has been found in the vicinity.

BUFFALO SNAKE OF MINNESOTA

From Greg Brick Facebook friend in Minnesota

The story of this cryptid was sent to me by Facebook friend Greg Brick of Minnesota. “It was known about by the Naudowessee Indians who called it the Tautongo Omlischo or Buffalo/Buffeloe Snake. It had a black head and tail, big and round like a buffalo, 4 feet with claws like a bear, three fathoms long, middle from neck to tail is red and it had fins down its back. Mounds and stones and a petroglyph in the area are formed in the shape of a snake. “ The chief of the warriours of the Mottobauntoway band who was my particular friend told me he saw one of these serpents on the plains with a young one which was in the crotch of a large tree by which he supposed that the old ones often climb up on the trees.” (Journals of John Carver pp 98-99.) The drawing below is my imitation of the one in Carver`s Journal.



A FEATHERED SNAKE

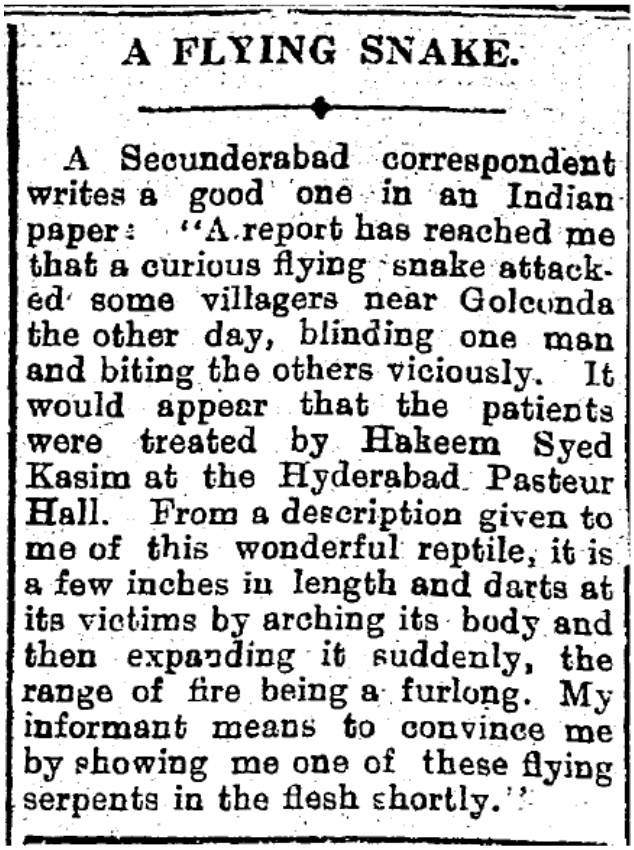
Philadelphia Inquirer October 28th 1895

Singular Reptile Discovered in the Wilds of Wisconsin.

Wisteria, Wis., Oct 27 - William Andy, who is an enthusiastic ophidian, has secured a singular specimen near here. It is a snake about three and a half feet long with a very broad blunt head. Instead of scales its body is covered with a coating of brilliant green feathers, except upon the belly where the undeveloped scales are pinkish. A perfect of crimson feathers surrounds the neck , which become erect when the reptile is angry. Mr Andy states that it is very venomous. It is his intention to send it to the Smithsonian Institute.

A FLYING SNAKE IN INDIA

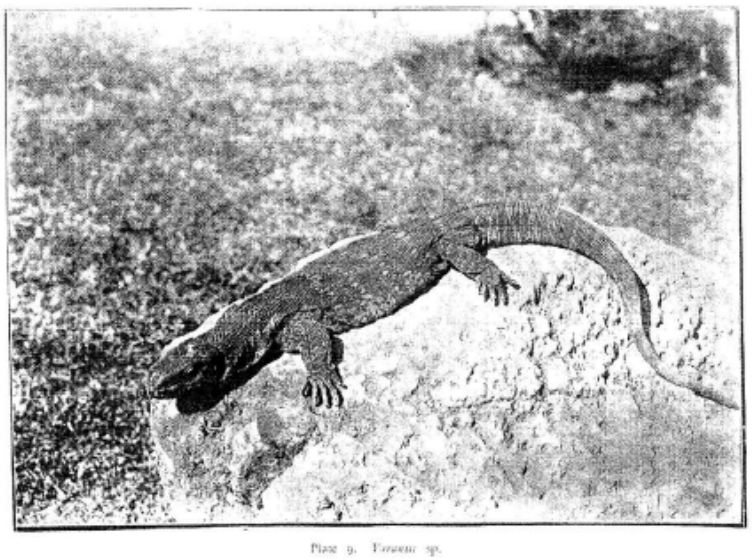
South China Morning Post July 21st 1923



A FLYING SNAKE.

A Secunderabad correspondent writes a good one in an Indian paper: "A report has reached me that a curious flying snake attacked some villagers near Golconda the other day, blinding one man and biting the others viciously. It would appear that the patients were treated by Hakeem Syed Kasim at the Hyderabad Pasteur Hall. From a description given to me of this wonderful reptile, it is a few inches in length and darts at its victims by arching its body and then expanding it suddenly, the range of fire being a furlong. My informant means to convince me by showing me one of these flying serpents in the flesh shortly."

This is Jon Downes`s blog on Cryptozoology Online for April 19th 2009 which he has given me permission to re-produce here: “I'd been vaguely aware for years that water monitors occasionally were to be found in Hong Kong. If I had thought about it - and I am not going to do a Stalinist rewrite of history and imbue my eight year old alter ego with insights that I certainly didn't have at that time - I probably would have thought that the monitor lizard that my family and I had seen a few years earlier near Magazine Gap had been of the species. However, when I saw Romer's magnificent specimen, it became perfectly obvious that the two species were entirely distinct. The water monitor



The Hong Kong Monitor Lizard from the Hong Kong Naturalist Vol 1 no 2 May 1930.

is a distinctive lizard with a rather beautiful pattern of yellow dots that has given it the alternate name of golden water monitor. It is also a much more delicate creature than the slightly chunky lizard that I had seen both in the botanical gardens and - albeit for a few seconds - in the wild. The Water monitor is the only member of its family in Hong Kong, or indeed in most of China. If the animal that I had seen was not a water- monitor, what on earth was it? Much to my joy, nearly 30 years after my original sighting, I discovered supporting evidence for the existence of a hitherto unknown species of large monitor lizard in Hong Kong. Over the years I have been collecting bound copies of The Hong Kong Naturalist. Sadly, it has become prohibitively expensive in recent years. A complete set was sold very recently for over £14,000. However, I have been collecting individual volumes as and when I can, and I have photocopies of many of the more interesting articles from the

remaining volumes. One of these - amazingly - contains an account of the capture of a lizard that appears to be an unknown species of monitor, from Victoria Peak .

“On the 21st January 1930 a lady walking along Lugard Road was frightened when she saw what she thought was a “miniature crocodile.” With the help of a passing policeman, some Chinese coolies, and a “Japanese gentleman who was passing” they cornered the creature. With great presence of mind the un-named Japanese Gentleman took off his coat and threw it over the animal. The lizard later allowed itself to be dumped in a sack and to be taken to a Police Station and ultimately to the Botanic Gardens where it “was placed in a cage.” The creature was examined by Dr Geoffrey Herklots, the most famous naturalist then living in Hong Kong. His description read thus:

Total length - 22 feet 10¼ inches, head: 6 inches, tail: 1 foot 6¼ inches.

Breadth - At neck 2¼ inches, middle of body 6 inches, in front of hind limbs 2½ inches, middle of tail 1 inch.

Depth - Base of tail 2 inches, groove along back and beginning of tail, ridge along rest of tail.

Colour - Above brown-grey, or deep olive, with yellow spots or hands, below a dirty yellow, neck no distinctive bands,

Eyes - Open and close independently, lower lids move upwards. Iris a marbled pale Vandyke brown with a very narrow white or very faintly yellow circle immediately next to pupil.”

Herklots noted that this was only one of several records of strange lizards seen both on Hong Kong Island and on the mainland at the time. It was initially identified as Varanus bengalensis, a species that isn't actually found in China. It was also tentatively identified as an African species - Varanus albiguaris. The surviving photographs, however, suggest that it was not either of these species. It is also certain that it was not the indigenous Varanus salvator so what was it?Today, exotic animals from all over the world are kept as pets, and escapees undoubtedly can and do become established in the wild; however, the international trade in exotic reptiles was almost non-existent seventy years ago. Therefore, the suggestion that the lizard that died soon after capture was an escaped African Varanus bengalensis can, I think, be discounted. Unfortunately, the originals of the photographs were destroyed during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during the Second World War, as was the preserved body of the unfortunate reptile. Two rather substandard pictures are all that remain. For what it is worth, however, I am convinced that the animal that I saw, and the creature photograph by Herklots, were of the same species. Precisely what it was remains a mystery.

FREAK SNAKE

Mr. Amos Chandler, of Bellingen, brought a freak snake, equipped with what appeared to be wings, to the "Daily Examiner" office, Grafton. The reptile was about two feet long and was of a brownish red color. Mr. Chandler stated that he caught the queer specimen on the Coff's Harbour -Woolgoolga road. The wings were about an inch long and were fixed halfway down the body. So far the variety of the snake has not been ascertained and Mr. Chandler intends sending the specimen to the Sydney Museum for determination.

The North-Western Courier New South Wales
October 11th 1937

Cabinet of Curiosities 1824 p. 176

AUSTRALASIAN MONSTER.

At Liverpool, New South Wales, two men voluntarily made affidavits, that they had seen in a bush, two miles and a half out of town, a tremendous snake, which to the best of their belief, was *forty-five feet in length, and three times in circumference* of the human body!!! He who first saw it, thinking it dead, threw a stick at it, when it reared its monstrous body five feet from the ground. A third person offered to corroborate on oath the depositions. A party of respectable gentlemen went in quest of this extraordinary object, but succeeded only in finding its track, which bore the impression of immense scales, and confirmed the reports. Some conjecture it must be a species of crocodile, from a mark in the earth fourteen inches long, apparently indented by its jaw.

THE EVENING STAR, WASHINGTON, D

STRANGE NEW LIZARD AT ZOO RECALLS WORLD'S EARLY DAYS

Creature Outside Known Classifications—Has Plates on Back Like Crocodile and Loves Water, But Probably Lives in Trees in Central America.

Pages of the book of life were turned back into a very ancient and very mysterious past at the National Zoological Park here yesterday with the arrival of a creature which defies classification and has some characteristics of a minature model of some of the monsters who roamed about the world in the age of reptiles.

It is a lizard, probably from Central America. Dr. William M. Mann, superintendent of the park, purchased it from a Philadelphia animal dealer on a telephonic description. It was one of a pair. The mate was purchased by the Bronx Zoo in New York.

Experts at the Smithsonian Institution, of which the Zoo is a part, cannot place the animal. It fits into none of the known tabulations.

Superficially it looks much like an iguana and, Dr. Mann says, doubtless is a relative of the iguana family. Where it differs is the fact that its back is plated like the back of a crocodile. The creature is about two and one-half feet long, more than half its length being taken up with its narrow tail. In color it is speckled bronze, green and yellow.

Judging from its bodily construction, Dr. Mann says, the lizard probably lives both in the water and in trees. It is equipped for protection in both habitats. When it was released in a glass cage and a basin of water placed inside, the animal made for the water eagerly. It is unusually active for a lizard.

Just what to feed the new lizard is somewhat of a puzzle. Keeper Blackburn will try it out on the favorite diet of the iguana family—bananas.

Another new arrival at the Zoo, also recalling a far-distant past, is the giant Japanese salamander, the largest living member of the amphibian family, to which toads and frogs belong. These creatures are the next development beyond fishes in the history of life. The Japanese salamanders are about five feet long.

They live in the mountain brooks of northern Japan, usually in very shallow water, but are perfectly at home outside the water.

Dr. Mann plans to call in other experts in an effort to identify the new lizard, he said yesterday. There is a possibility, he said, that it is some rare species which has been classified long ago by some Latin-American biologist and the classification lost sight of.

If it actually proves a new species it will go down as one of the great biological discoveries of the year.

The Evening Star, Washington, November 10th 1925

A signe from Heaven, or a fearfull and Terrible Noise, heard in the Ayre at Alborow, in the county of Suffolke

On Thursday, the 4th day of August, at 5 of the clock in the afternoone. Wherein was heard the beating of Drums, the discharging of Muskets and great ordnance for the space of an houre and more, as will be attested by many men of good worth, and exhibited to some cheife members of the Honorable House of Commons. With a stone that fell from the sky in that Storme, or Noise rather, which is here to be seene in Towne, being of a great weight.

Aug. 12. London : Printed by T. Fawcet, 1642.

Upon Thursday, the 4th day of this instant August, about the hour of foure or five o'clocke in the afternoone, there was a wonderful noyse heard in the ayre, as of a Drum beating most fiercely, which after a while was seconded with a long peale of small shot, and after that a discharging as it were, of great ordnance in a pitcht-field. This continued with some vicissitudes of small shot and great ordnance for the space of one hour and an halfe, and then making a mighty and violent report altogether; at the ceasing thereof there was observed to fall down out of the skie a stone of about foure pounds weight, which was taken up by them who saw it fall, and being both strange for the forme of it, and somewhat miraculous for the manner of it, was by the same parties who are ready to attest this Truth brought up and shewed to a worthy member of the House of Commons, upon whose ground it was taken up, and by him to divers friends who have both seen and handled the same. Now the manner of finding of this stone was on this wise : one Captaine Johnson and one Master Thompson, men well knowne in that part of Suffolke, were that day at Woodbridge about the launching of a ship that was newly builded there, who hearing this marvellous noise towards Alborow, verily supposed that some enemy was landed, and some sudden onset made upon the Towne of Alborow. This occasioned them to take Horse and hasten homewards, the rather because they heard the noise of the battel grow lowder. And being at that instant when that greatest cracke and report was made in conclusion, on their way upon an heath betwixt the two Townes, Woodbridge and Alborow, they observed the fall of this stone, which grazing in the fall of it along upon the heath, some 6 or 7 yards, had out run their observation where it rested, had not a dog which was in their company followed it by the scent as was hot, and brought them where it lay covered over with grasse and earth, that the violence of its course had contracted about it. This is the true relation of the finding of this stone, which is 8 inches long and 5 inches broad, and 2 inches thick.

Some Curious Folklore

Richard Muirhead

Folklore of Bells

Ghostly Bell Ringer

This story appeared in the Macclesfield Courier of January 15th 1953:

Sexton`s Theory of bell ringing mystery.

The bells of Pott Shrigley Church have figured in radio mystery plays, but last week-end they provided a real life mystery. Early on Saturday morning the village was roused from its sleep by the ringing of one of the bells. Farmers turned over in their beds: surely,it could not be Sunday and they had overslept. No,it was Saturday and the time 6 a.m. Villagers sat up in bed and listened. Ding dong, ding dong, went the bell. " There can`t be a service at this early hour." " I am sure the Vicar never announced there would be a service," were just some of the thoughts expressed by the people.

The bell rang on and the longer it continued, the deeper the mystery got. Then,after a full 25 minutes ringing, it ceased.

Pott Shrigley Church Cheshire

CHURCH WAS LOCKED

Investigations were made. The church was still locked and no-one could have got inside. Villagers asked each other: “ Did you hear the bell ringing this morning?” And all replied “Yes” .

The Sexton Mr W.H. Bennett, was consulted to see if he could throw any light on the mystery. He had heard the bell ringing, but why he could not say. He certainly had not rung it.

He made investigation and all he can put it down to was that when the mechanism of the clock began to ring the bell for the hour at 6 a.m. Something slipped and the bell for the hour at 6 a.m something slipped and the bell was rung for 25 minutes before the mechanism righted itself. He pooh poohed the idea that there could have been some mysterious visitor to the tower!

An e-mail from Pott Shrigley resident Kath Matheson on January 15th 2016:

The explanation of the chiming mechanism getting stuck is plausible. Billy Bennett, who is quoted in the article, lived a few hundred yards from church and was not only the sexton but also parish clerk, organist, clerk to the governors etc so knew everything that went on in the village so if he couldn't explain it with certainty then the chances of us explaining it now are slim. But I will keep trying!.
All the best,

Kath

On Jan 18th Kath e-mailed me:

Hi Richard,

We have tried to find out a bit more about this. The tower captain of the time's widow can't remember the incident but knows it wasn't the tower captain as he would have been milking at 6am! Still have a few people to try but are now off on hols for a week so can't pursue further yet.

†

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HAREMS OF MEN

TRIBE IN WHICH HUSBANDS ARE SLAVES

A tribe in which women practise polygamy and the inhabitants of the harem are men,and not women,has been discovered in Mongolia by M. Kasloff, a Russian scientist,who has just returned here from a journey to Tibet. The tribe,says M.Kasloff, is ruled by women,and each woman has several husbands as her slaves. M.Kasloff also relates how he braved “the demons” of Mongolian superstition by swimming across by swimming across a sacred lake in the Gobi desert and was himself hailed as a demon when he came out of the water unscathed.

Original source (1927) but also in Man Bites Man (1980)by George Ives and Paul Sieveking

MARMITE AND HAIR GROWTH

Daily Mail

March 27th 1995.

Spreading fast, a hair-raising myth

Spread Marmite on your toast and you`ve got a traditional tea-time treat. Slather it over a balding head and you`ll join the growing band of men who swear it restores a healthy crop of hair. The practice, which is apparently especially favoured in the North, was discovered by researcher Jonathan Langley during a study of urban myths and legends. `Appreciable and sometimes spectacular regrowth is said to result when Marmite is liberally and regularly applied to balding heads and left overnight,` he said in a letter to Marketing Week magazine. Converts are easily recognised by their `curiously coloured ebony hair and a pervasive odour,` he added. They attribute the spread`s power to spurt hair growth to its rich mixture of essential B-vitamins and thiamin. But its seems there is little chance of the Marmite jar taking a permanent place in the bathroom cabinet. `As with all classic urban myths, there is naturally not a hair of corroborative evidence to substantiate this highly dubious story,` Mr Langley writes. Fred Trueman, the former Yorkshire fast bowler with the famously menacing forelock, was one of the first to dismiss the Marmite treatment as balderdash.`I know a lot of very nice bald people and none of them would do anything so daft,` he said. More than 18 million jars of Marmite are bought each year in Britain. A spokesman for manufacturers CPC UK Ltd, in Esher, Surrey,said.

KASAI REX AND SANDERSON'S SAUROPOD - A COUPLE OF VERY DUBIOUS 'LIVING DINOSAURS'.

Karl Shuker

Emailed by Dr Karl Shuker to Mr Richard Muirhead, the Editor, at Flying Snake on 2 January 2016.

A number of mystery beasts considered by some cryptozoologists to be possible non-avian living dinosaurs, on account of their alleged resemblance to certain well known prehistoric types, have been reported from various regions of Africa. They include such notable examples as the Congo's sauropod-like mokele-mbembe, its vaguely stegosaurian mbielu-mbielu-mbielu, and its ceratopsian-reminiscent emela-ntouka. Whether any or all of these Congolese cryptids really are non-avian dinosaurs has yet to be determined , but there are sufficient, consistently similar accounts of each of them on file for at least their existence to seem plausible.

In contrast, there are certain other reports of alleged living dinosaurs on file from Africa that are far less realistic, or – if you prefer – much more suspect. Two such examples of the decidedly dubious kind are as follows.

On 16 February 1932, while travelling through the Kasai Valley in what is now the Democratic Congo, Swedish plantation overseer J.C. Johanson and his native helper encountered what he subsequently described in a letter published by the *Rhodesia Herald* newspaper as "something incredible – a monster, about 16 yards [48 ft] in length, with a lizard's head and tail". This 'monster' then rapidly vanished. Later that same day, however, while crossing a big swamp on their way back home, Johanson and his helper re-encountered the giant reptile:

> There in the swamp, the huge lizard appeared once more, tearing lumps from a dead rhino. It was covered in ooze. I was only about 25 yards away from the lizard's mouth. Just as I clicked, it jumped into deep water."...I thought of my camera. I could plainly hear the crunching of rhino bones in the lizard's mouth. Just as I clicked, it jumped into deep water."

The photograph snapped by Johanson was published alongside his letter in the *Rhodesia Herald*, but is unquestionably a crude fake, as noted by veteran cryptozoologist Dr Bernard Heuvelmans in his own coverage of this incident in his book *On the Track of Unknown Animals*. (1958)It consists of a Komodo dragon monitor lizard *Varanus komodoensis* that has been cut out of some other photo and pasted onto one of a jungle setting, with its feet resting almost on tip-toes upon an unidentifiable object presumed to be an animal carcase.

Fig 1 Johanson`s photograph of the supposed reptilian monster encountered by him,standing on a presumed animal carcass, (Public domain)

Having said that, it should be pointed out that nowhere in his letter did Johanson actually refer to the supposed giant reptile as a dinosaur, merely as a huge lizard. The reason why this cryptid, clearly a hoax in the light of Johanson's fake photo of it, is deemed to have been a living dinosaur – hence its subsequently-coined soubriquet of 'Kasai rex' – is a comment accompanying Johanson's letter that was written by one of the newspaper's own staff, which read: "Johanson stumbled upon a unique specimen of a dinosaur family that must have lived millenniums [sic] ago". Many, many millennia ago!

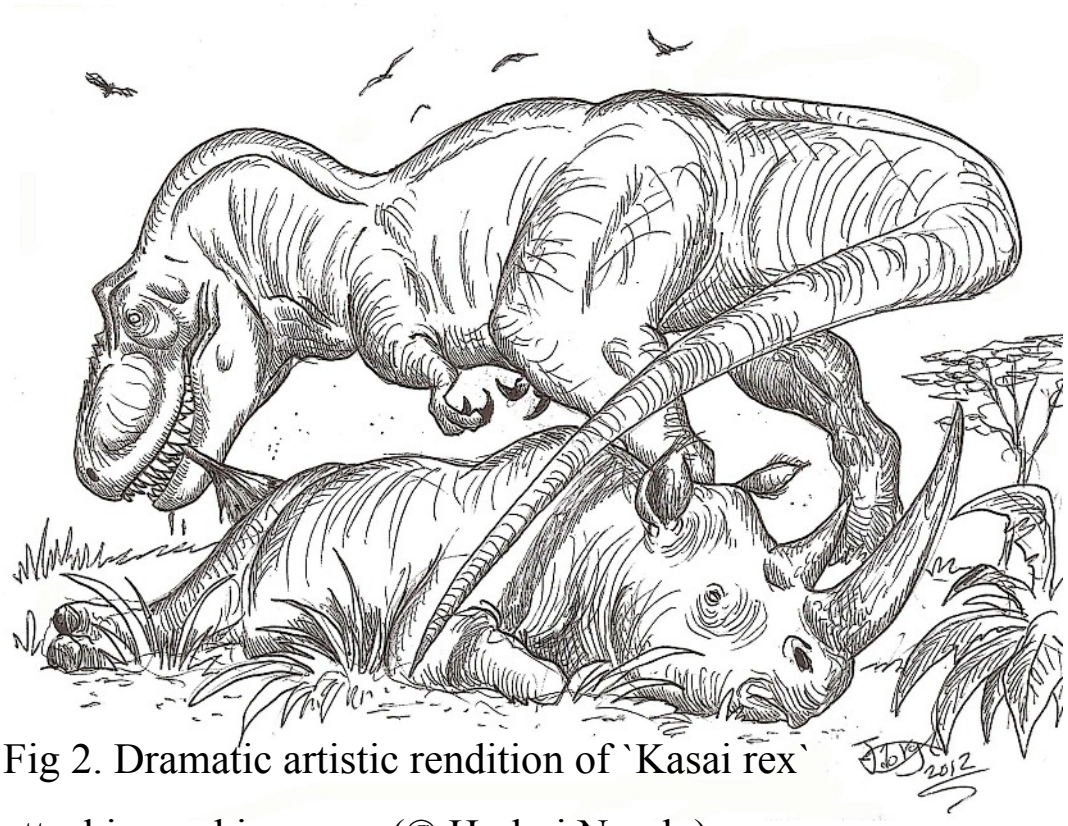

Fig 2. Dramatic artistic rendition of `Kasai rex` attacking a rhinoceros (© Hodari Nundu)

Tellingly, Johanson made no mention of any local name for this spectacular creature, despite being accompanied by a native helper, whose people would surely be only too well aware of such an enormous, ferocious beast (if such a beast truly existed), and would therefore have certainly given its

species its own local name. Consequently, this is another clue that the entire story is just that, a work of fiction.

Online, various websites claim that Johanson later stated that the monster was reddish in colour with blackish stripes, sported a long snout, numerous teeth, thick legs that reminded him of a lion's, "built for speed"; and that he had decided that it was a *Tyrannosaurus*. However, no original sources for these additional comments claimed for Johanson are given, and they were not mentioned by Heuvelmans in his coverage.

In 2007, an additional alleged Johanson photograph of 'Kasai rex' perched upon its prey also materialised online. This was far clearer and much more professional than the original one, showing a readily identifiable theropod dinosaur on an equally recognisable prone rhinoceros (either dead or sleeping). Needless to say, however, this was no more genuine than the first photo, but I will not call it a hoax. This is because it was produced by a known photo-manipulator called Finbar (using an image of an *Allosaurus* model superimposed upon a rhino photo), who (as he always does) openly admitted that it was indeed a photo-manipulated composite picture produced by him, and hence did not prepare it with any intention to deceive.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Ivan T. Sanderson, an American zoologist, animal collector, and author of several popular books documenting his journeys to exotic locations worldwide in search of animals, was also famous as America's premier cryptozoologist. Sadly, however, he was equally (in)famous for his regrettable tendency to exaggerate quite profoundly when documenting his travels, and to entertain unsubstantiated and sometimes quite bizarre lines of zoological speculation

He also claimed to have sighted a truly unparalleled array of cryptids. These included: a huge Cameroon bat with twice the wingspan of any known bat species; a giant three-toed penguin on a Florida beach; a large pink salamander in a pond on his New Jersey farm; skins of an undescribed Mexican wild cat with a huge ruff of fur round its neck but which happened to be destroyed by water before anyone else was able to see or examine them; an invisible catfish and a bioluminescent lizard on Trinidad; a herd of mysterious miniature wild horses in Haiti; and what alleged by him to be a living dinosaur in tropical Africa.

Any one of these would be a spectacular sight to behold for any cryptozoologist, but for all of them to be seen by the same single person? That takes some believing! Indeed, commenting upon Sanderson in his book *A Living Dinosaur?* (1987), fellow American cryptozoologist (and mokele-mbembe seeker) Prof. Roy P. Mackal succinctly wrote:

“Sanderson started his career as a brilliant zoologist (in my opinion), became more and more sensational and exploitative in his writings...[though he] rarely deluded himself, but, over the years, regardless of how unscrupulous he was in his later writings. Sanderson died in 1973, aged 62, and it is often claimed (although some dispute this claim)

that the cause of death was a brain tumour. This allegation has in turn led to speculation that, if true, perhaps the tumour's pernicious effects may explain at least in part Sanderson's tendency towards making sensationalised claims, especially during the later part of his life.

Be that as it may (or may not), Sanderson's alleged sighting of a living sauropod supposedly occurred in 1932, while taking part in the Percy Sladen Expedition to Cameroon. Here is Mackal's account of Sanderson's reputed close encounter of the cryptid kind:

When Sanderson, in the company of the American naturalist Gerald Russell, arrived at Mamfe Pool on the Mainyu River, they came to a place that had many caves in the cliff-like river banks, many partially or almost completely filled with river water. They reported a loud, noisy disturbance, as of fighting beasts, coming from one of the caves. Both saw the back of something larger than a hippopotamus break the surface, immediately submerging after only a momentary display. Farther upstream near the confluence of the Cross River, they saw "vast hippo-like tracks: although there were no hippopotami [sic] in the area". Sanderson was told there were no hippos because this creature, the "embulu-em'bembe (Sanderson's spelling), drove them away. Sanderson stated that the tracks they found on the Mainyu River could not possibly have been made by a crocodile. He believed that what was observed rising in the cave was the head of the creature. In 1971, Sanderson, in a letter to James Powell [a herpetologist long interested in reports of dinosaur-like cryptids in Africa], wrote that its head "was bigger than a whole hippo, and the tracks were sauropod This reference by Sanderson to a large head belonging to a sauropod always bothered me a great deal. Sanderson knew very well that all sauropods had long necks with small heads. However, as we discovered during my expeditions, the term Mokele-mbembe is used for the long-necked, small-headed sauropod animal, on the one hand, and in a generic sense for other unidentified animals.

To my mind, whatever the animal was, it is far more likely to have been its back that briefly surfaced rather than its head, because any animal whose head alone was bigger than an entire hippopotamus would have been a veritable behemoth – unless, once again, it owed its gargantuan size to the imagination of Sanderson? It would be interesting to read Russell's testimony concerning this sighting, but as yet I have been unable to locate anything written by him about it.

'Kasai rex' and Sanderson's very suspect sauropod notwithstanding, there is little doubt that, whatever their precise identities may be, there are some major zoological discoveries still waiting to be unfurled by a real life Professor Challenger in the depths of the Dark Continent, but especially amid the Lost World of the Congo's

Likouala swamplands - a vast, primeval wilderness constituting an ideal haven for secluded survivors from a past age.

This article is exclusively excerpted for *Flying Snake* from my forthcoming book *Still in Search of Prehistoric Survivors*, which will be published later this year. My thanks to Hodari Nundu for kindly permitting me to include his magnificent Kasai rex artwork here.

* * * * *

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Drac -The Monster of Lake Banyoles

Javier Resines

Part One

As a seeker of stories about unknown animals I could feel some envy, to some degree, for not living in countries like the United States, Canada or the UK where almost every lake has its own original monster. More or less large, more or less famous, more or less amazing ... Anyway, the interesting thing is to have a strange, huge species living in the lakes. That attracts publicity, curiosity, researchers, money.

As I say, many countries are lucky to have fearsome beasts inhabiting rivers and lakes. Perhaps the most publicized of them all is Nessie, the Loch Ness monster known to have terrorized all who approach its banks since 565 A.D., when St. Columba saved a fool from dying in the jaws of the dreaded beast.

Of equal or greater interest for fans hunting monsters are American lakes. And we also have good examples in countries like Argentina, Sweden, China, Russia, Spain, Sudan, ... But .... Have we read that right? Spain? Yes, dear reader in Spain there are also lakes full of fierce monsters. The best known of them all? Drac , the monster of Lake Banyoles.

The lakes and the legend of their formation

Lake Banyoles is located in the province of Gerona, in Catalonia, near the French border. It is the second largest lake in Spain in extension (only surpassed by Sanabria in Zamora, Castilla y Leon)

Fig 1 Location of Lake Banyoles.

and has an unknown depth at some points that could reach 150 meters. Some open fissures on the rock`s geology could provide big surprises on the depth of the place. But for now, the possible investigation of this data will have to wait indefinitely: unaccountably, scuba diving in the area is prohibited.

Banyoles is a place that has always attracted human beings. Its shores have been inhabited for over 50,000 years ago by our Neanderthal ancestors who found ideal living space in the rich lands, as evidenced by the remains found in nearby troglodyte caves. There is even a legend, much closer in time, located in the Middle Ages which explains how the lake was created. Legend has it that a farmer called Morgat or Murgat a resident of a nearby village called Porqueres, left early one morning with his oxen to till their land. This farmer was well known in the area because of the quality of draft oxen he possessed. When Murgat made the first sinkhole in the ground and water started coming out, he thought it was only a small stream and continued to work without giving it more importance. When he finished work in the fields he realized that every hole he had dug began to boil the water, so he quickly quickly fled from there. When he reached a nearby hill, he could see that he had lost the land and that the population had won a lake, Banyoles. In another version, the farmer was warned by a voice to cease digging. "Murgat, Murgat, take the horse and go home. Murgat, Murgat, take the horse or you will be lost" said the fearsome voice. By disobeying, the place started to flood and Morgat drowned .

Actually , it is believed that Banyoles was formed over a period of 80,000 to 250,000 years. Very recently , speaking from a geological point of view . The tectonic movements that led to the birth of the Pyrenees opened the Ampurdán fault, resulting in the current basin. It is believed that in its first stage , the extent of Estany (a lake, in Catalan) was much higher than today. Probably , the water level reached between 6 and 8 meters higher than today. Therefore , the volume of water and the possibility of development of species of considerable size had to be superior to those in contemporary times.

Drac , the monster

But we have said that the lake has its monster too. A monster with its own name, like that of the British or American lakes. For those who do not know the history of Drac , as it is called, the most disturbing of its inhabitants , we will recount the story, also stopping at the most recent sightings that have occurred and bringing some new interesting information to help us better understand this curious phenomenon halfway between cryptozoology and legend. To start our history we must go back to the late eighth century . By that time , a beast of terrible dimensions had found shelter in a deep cave by the lakeshore .

The animal is described as having a thick skin with scales; provided with sharp spikes on the spine and large wings though - due to their weight - he could not fly. He could only walk with his huge legs and in doing so , the earth rumbled on his way, making all his neighbours afraid. The chroniclers of the time tell of spitting fire in his eyes and his breath was so foul-smelling that it could poison the water, dry fields and transmit diseases to animals and people. His great appetite led him to devour hundreds of cattle belonging to the locals of the region and even some local residents began to disappear , a fact that was blamed on the action of the dragon. The neighbours, who had begun to seek refuge inside the city walls for fear of attacks, requested help from Charlemagne 's troops who were stationed in Gerona, on his way to one of their raids against Arabs . According to the chronicler , the construction of the wall of the city of Banyoles did not start until 1209, some five hundred years after the passage of the Carolingian armies in those lands . There is even doubt that the legendary warrior trod those places but certainly his son Luis did.

The story tells us that a column of soldiers reached the monster's lair in order to get rid of it . It however , killed almost all the warriors . The news came to Charlemagne and he decided to take charge of his army to avenge his men. From here on, there are two versions: In the one told by the chroniclers of the emperor, the fight was a draw . Farmers who attended the fight say the soldiers were defeated again and the Beast spared the illustrious and defeated warrior Charlemagne. After this attempt to kill the animal failed, the inhabitants of the area resorted to a Franciscan saint known as Mer of Narbonne (France) who - apparently - also accompanied the emperor and whose granddaughter was possibly attacked by the dragon .

Saint Mer (as history later called him) went to meet the Drac and began to pray to him , managing to calm the animal and take it meekly to the village. Once there he managed to explain to the citizens that , both the disappearance of cattle and men , were caused by the outrages carried out by the Carolingian army, who used cattle to eat and men as soldiers after enlisting them by force.

It is said that after this event , the dragon returned to his lair in the lake and, since then, remained submerged under water , sometimes to emerge to satiate its appetite with the fish that inhabit the lake. Just fish or something else? The truth is that the Drac still lives in the northern part of the lake, in a place known as the dredger , right in the area for bathers. Disturbing , right?

The Legend Becomes Reality

We have read what the chronicles have told us about the legend that comes from the eighth century. But what happened next? The story continues to refer to various sightings of a strange animal , both in the lake and its surroundings , over the centuries .

Thus, between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were several incidents that rekindled interest in the monster. Sebastian d'Arbó in his book Mysterious Catalonia says that " there are chronicles of relatively recent times , as late as the nineteenth century , which mention encounters with the monster , for example , the attack on the pilgrims (?) who made the journey between Olot and Banyoles, when it left the lake , crossed the road and attacked the travellers . "

The writer himself gives us an explanation , wondering if it could be the presence of a large hungry water snake looking for food. However , this type of snake never exceeds two meters in length and has herbivorous eating habits. Moreover, it seems unlikely for travellers , no matter how scared they were, to mistake a known animal for something mysterious and out of our worst nightmares , as seems to be the case with Drac .Some experts, such as Josep Guijarro in Guide to Magical Catalonia, have wanted to see in the Catalan monster a Tanystropheus , a great reptile from the Triassic, a being which had a neck of up to three meters in length and who fed itself on fish with no need to enter the water.

One strange morphology that could correspond to the usual description that is usually made of Drac , is of a great vegetarian reptile that lives most of the time in the water and the surface, that moves on all fours. However , fossils of this species have only been found in England, Germany , Switzerland , Italy and Israel , never in Spain .The aforementioned attack on the caravan of Olot is not the only violent event that is attributed to the intervention of the monster. We move to the afternoon of May 26 ,1913. On the occasion of having sung Mass for a new curate at Banyoles, many people gathered in the town to spend a holiday. A group of assistants had a walk by the lake in a boat - car, a recreational boat habitual in those waters in those days. A few minutes after leaving the dock, the boat overturned. For unknown reasons , killing ten of the twelve passengers.

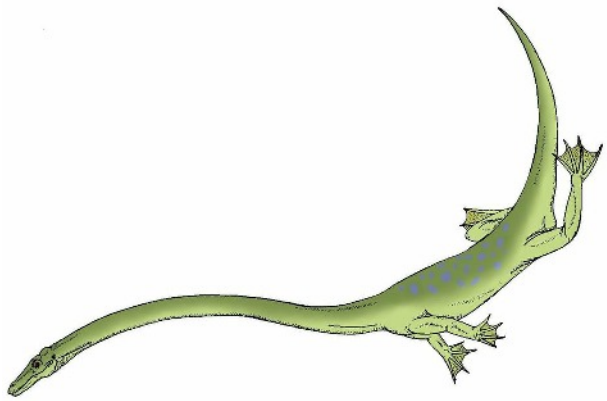

Fig 2 Tanystropheus

Relief efforts were useless, as were efforts to recover the bodies. Months later floating crew members were found scattered in an advanced state of decomposition , but nothing more. The popular imagination quickly identified the culprit of the misfortune : the Drac . Several witnesses said it looked as if the boat had hit something that had just come to the surface . However , the investigation of the wreckage did not reveal any information that could help clarify the facts in any way. Various witnesses were assured that the boat had hit against the monster that had finished emerging up to the surface. Nevertheless, the investigation of the rest did not reveal any data that could help to clarify the facts in any sense.

Fig 3 Wreck of the launch navigating
Lake Banyoles in 1913

Drac himself, the mysterious culprit has been blamed in another terrible shipwreck that happened in a more recent time, specifically on the 8th October 1998. At 10.30 am l`Oca (a recreation boat that sails the lake with tourists) left the wharf with 141 French pensioners on board who prepared themselves to enjoy a pleasant stroll. After only fifteen meters from the lake edge, a flow of water was found entering from the stern. The boat tried to return and to maintain course to the edge but, in only two minutes, the boat sank, killing 20 people. On this occasion the quick intervention of a group of hikers who visited the area prevented the tragedy from reaching greater proportions. The leak contributed to the collapse of the boat although specialists consulted considered it unlikely that a boat of that size would be capsized for that reason. Again, the monster?

Fig 4. Wreck of the launch L`Orca

MORE TO FOLLOW…

Mermaids in the Dutch Tradition

Part One

Loes Modderman

Fig 1
Statue of a sailor mermaid from Portsmouth, Virginia ... who is sporting Dutch colors.

Mermaids, and their spouses the Mermen, are everywhere.
There are hardly any countries by the sea who haven't got them, if any, and other countries have their own lake, river or mountain stream traditions. Thanks to the many Mermaids in fairytales and tradition, and their most common form of a beautiful woman from the waist down ending in a practical fishtale but well proportioned and attractive nonetheless, our image of the creatures is rather well defined. But there turn out to be many variations.

Dutch mermaids never before caught my fancy, but researching for this article in several old books brought a lot of interesting information to the surface.

Fig 2 Maerlant`s Mermaid

IN DUTCH LITERATURE

First there is the Flemish medieval writer ***Jacob van Maerlant*** *(±1230-±1291)* who wrote *'Der Naturen Bloeme'* (1270). Flanders and the Netherlands were one country for a long time, sharing the same language (as they still do), so van Maerland counts for the Dutch tradition. He made use of bestiaries of a much older date. The Mermaid has her roots in Pliny and other classical writers which were much read (and believed) and referred to in later centuries. Van Maerlant's *'Flower of Nature'* was a rhymed version of the work of the Dutch Dominican monk *Thomas de Cantimpré,*

who brought all biological knowledge together in the 13th century. Van Maerland writes a poem on the mermaid that starts like this:

"Syrena dat es die maerminne
Phisiologus hevet inne
Dat si draghen wijfs ghelike
Toten nevele sekerlike":

Even for me this is difficult to read, but in translation: *"The Siren is the mermaid as she is found in the natural history (of the Greek Physiologus, 2nd century CE) She is like a woman, surely up to her navel.* "

Van Maerland writes 4 more strophes, which were translated by Peter Burger in his proze compilation of van Maerlant: *Het Boek der Natuur* (1989) He writes: "They are big and look abhorrent, with a lot of tangled hair. There are Mermaids observed when they are, like women, breastfeeding their children. Adelinus of Malmesbury (who wrote *'Liber Monstrorum'* and is one of van Maerlants sources) tells us that Mermaids have eagle claws and fish scales and a fishtail which they use as a rudder. Their singing is so enchanting that no seaman who hears them is able to stay awake. Then the mermaids grab him, drown him and tear him to shreds."
In the picture it's obvious that Maerlant's 'Mermaid' (and other Sirens of old) not only had a tail, but also the feet of a bird, which might have facilitated their walking on firm ground.

In the *Nederrijns Moraalboek* from 1253, an anonymus text, one of the oldest Dutch texts available, the writer tells us something about Mermaids: *"There are four kinds. Two are half human half fish and they sing like a violin and a harp and a man who hears them have to come to them. But then he falls asleep. When the Mermaid finds him thus she kills him, which makes her guilty, but the man is guilty of believing her."*

Our most famous Dutch 17th century poet, ***Joost van den Vondel*** (1587 – 1679), was well aware of the mermaid traditions, but it's not likely he believed the folk stories.
In his *'Vermaeckelijcke Inleydinghe'* (Entertaining Introductions) he describes the traditional *Triton* blowing his kinkhorn, and the Mermaid as the creature combing her hair and adorning it with jewels, meanwhile bent on sinking ships. The last strofe is, in translation: *"Help, Nymphen, when you see them, who wouldn't wish they were born of human blood and seed. Who doesn't complain that your body is upper woman and fish below?"*

The year Vondel was born ***Adriaen Coenen*** (1514-1587) died, (whose work

Fig 3 VISBOEK Mermaid

De meermin op folio 191 recto van het Visboeck

`

`Het Vischboek` has recently been digitalised by the Koninklijke Library) in Den Haag, where everthing ever written in the Netherlands is archived and becoming ever more available for research. In the Vischboek and a little later in the 'Walvischboek' Coenen, himself a fishmonger, collected and illustrated his knowledge of sea creatures, and besides all the usual ones like the herring and the cod, he also paid attention to a wealth of mythical creatures he never saw himself, like *'Sea Knights'*, *'Sea Monks'* and, of course, Mermaids. Like van Maerlant before him, Coenen got his inspiration among other sources, from the second century Greek *Physiologus*.

Here is one of the many examples from Coenen's Vischboek.

For one moment we go back to van Maerlant, who gives a detailed description of the Sea Monk and the Sea Knight as well which must have inspired Coenen too:

About those he says:

"The Monachus Marinus is the Sea Monk. They are found in the sea around England. I read that they have the upper body of a human being and a tonsure on their head, like monks. They miss an upper lip, and teeth and nose have merged. Instead of legs they have a fishtail. When a human being comes near, the sea monk jumps around till he is so near that he can grab his victim and pull it into the water. Then he devours him, because that's what they like best: human flesh."
and...
"A Zitiron or Sea Knight is a remarkable monster. According to the Liber Rerum (of Thomas of Cantimpré). His front looks like a knight. With his in two parts divided hands the sea knight can give serious blows. That makes him a dangerous prey. When he is caught and people try to kill him, it's hard to hurt him. These monsters are mainly found in the sea around England. "

Sea knights were popular in folklore in the 15th and 16th century, and they were impersonated at folk festivals.

FOLK SUPERSTITION

Less literary and more magical and sometimes dark was the belief in Mer-creatures of different varieties in especially the north of the Netherlands. Let's start with one of my favorite books: *Volksverhalen en Legenden*, by **M.D.Teenstra,** published in 1843.

Teenstra had the objective to show his readers, mostly in the province of Groningen where he was born, how silly their superstions were, but in doing so he gave us a unique insight in great detail of the many animistic, nature bound beliefs that were still alive and kicking in the 19th century.
Groningen and Friesland are the most northern provinces of the Netherlands, and in Teenstra's days, apart from some old cities, rural, with lonely farms, few forests, many cows and agriculture, with great vistas (if you like flat) and much unobstructed sky.

Fig 4 Westerly Frisia

Friesland's landscape is different, with several big lakes and more forest area. Bordering on Groningen is the beautiful Waddenzee, with a row of islands. Not much has changed. The land is old, and once had a rich folklore. Before dykes protected the inland, storms and floods did a lot of damage. The most devastating flood was the *Cosmas and Damianus flood* of 1509, when the Dollard, a body of water between Groningen and Germany, became a veritable inner sea. On the 16th century map here the *red* province is Friesland, the *green* is Groningen and the *yellow* is West Friesland, in Germany.[1]

No wonder that respect for nature's pranks led to the ensoulment of the landscape, not unlike that happens in any other rural country.
Teenstra writes that the population of Groningen and Friesland was convinced of the existance of waterspirits and waterspooks, who were dangerous for the lonely labourer whose work brought him near the lakes and rivers. Especially dangerous were the '*nikkers*' , black creatures with a big head and red eyes. They were the Devil's minions and tried to lead the innocent astray. Especially dangerous were these for bathing children, whom they pulled under the surface to drown.
Then there were the Mermaids, the Waternimphs, the Waterfairies, the Waterwitches or Sirenen, and their counterparts, the Tritons, Mermen or Seamen.
Most of these creatures - the distinction, if any, is not very clear - had a fishtail, but some had not. Some walked on feet.
In the second century there were, according to very old, not specifically named chronicles, two of these Mermaids coming on land from the *Lauwersea*, between Friesland and Groningen. They travelled through Friesland, only to go back in the sea when they had enough excercise. Where that happened is not clear.
But Jacob van Lennep tells somewhere in his boek *'Nederlandsche Legenden'* (1890) about the year 130 AD, that during a calamity of some kind 'a mass of Mermen' invaded the Friesian coasts and swam in and out of the tidal inlets. Maybe these two references are connected.

There were Waterspooks, says Teenstra, that were called '*Boezehapperts*' in Friesland. They were so dangerous that children were instructed by *'Cartesian devils'* to help them imagining these devilish creatures. Teenstra describes this tool like the one you can see here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Wwz_BISA7w
Such watery models even had a place in the church, as a warning for constant vigilance of the churchgoing population, which was everyone in those days.
Then there are the Nixes, another kind of waterspook, and the mermaidlike *Ondines*.
Teenstra tells us that in the '*Sappemeer*', before 1618 a lake, now a city named after it, was once called the *'Devil's Lake'*, because it harboured monsters and waterspooks of several species, according to fishermen who saw and heard these creatures call out in this and other lakes.

[1] This will not show up here as I cannot print in colour. - R

THE STORIES

Precise descriptions of most of these creatures are lacking, due to the fact that they differ from place to place and from time to time.
There's a cross pollination between the Dutch provinces and the bordering German region (West Friesland) where the dialect sounds still almost Dutch. People freely went both ways to live and work and they took their beliefs and stories with them.
Germany, with it's long river Rhine with many branches, had an abundance of water creatures, of which the most famous is Lorelei on the dangerous rock outcrop of the same name, over looking the river Rhine, made immortal by *Heinrich Heine's* poem, set on the well known melody dating from 1837, by *Friedrich Silcher*. In folklore she is often depicted as a beautiful Mermaid with a bad character. But her story is more complicated than that.

Mermaids are in abundance in the book *'Nederlandse Overleveringen'*, by **K. ter Laan** (1932), who makes use of a number of sources. Many of the stories in this book and in *'Groninger Overleveringen'* by the same author (1930) are stories written down as they were told from generation to generation.
Here's one:
"Mermaids are often enough seen, also on the beach. There they lay in the sun combing their long, blond hair. That's a beautiful sight. Her breasts are white as snow and much more beautiful than other women's. When they are aware that you are looking, they disappear in the sea, but they keep looking over their shoulders.
Below the waist they have the body of a fish and a fishtail, which allows them to swim. They also have a beautiful voice. They make gestures to the seamen to follow them into the water. When they swim in front of the ship or sit upon the waves, storm is coming. A cautious skipper will then trim the sails."

And another one:
"In the year 1305, the 10th of March, in the middle of the sea a sea knight was caught, in full armour and very nice and well made was his body. He was taken on a trip through the country to make people admire him, but already in the third week he died in Dokkum (Friesland)."

Or:
"In this year 1558 Onno Leeuwe and some friends has seen a Merwife near Ameland (one of the islands north of Friesland) almost on land, and they have shot her with their rifle so that she cried out and sank downwards. But a moment later she came up again, and that Merwife put both her hands on the board of the ship, and looked them in the eye in a dreadful manner. That's what Leeuwe and his son Lubbert told people."

Here a reminder of the importance of Sea folk around the Coat of Arms of *Zierikzee*, Zeeland.

Fig 5. Coat of Arms of Zierikzee

In the rest of the Netherlands there are mermaids too. The village of *Namen* (not the city of Namen in Belgium) in Zeeuws Vlaanderen, (the most southerly part of the province of Zeeland) was once a good place to live.
According to this legend the farmers were rich and arrogant. It happens. But disaster was not far away, certainly not in a province like Zeeland where storm and water made life always uncertain.

According to the story a Mermaid appeared in a well, and called out: *"Namen, Namen shall be wiped away, only the tower will be left standing."*

Fig 6. Drowned land near Namen. Wikipedia Commons.

And so it happened. The *All Saints Flood* of 1570 obliterated not only Namen but a big part of the province, which is referred to as *'Het verdronken land van Saeftinghe'* (the drowned land of Saeftinghe) . Namen's tower stood for years, but in the end it was demolished . The bells were given to the nearby village of Graauw. Above is a satelite picture from Wikipedia of the drowned land, that is now an important nature reserve.

TO BE CONTINUED…

A MOST TRUE AND STRANGE REPORT OF A MONSTROUS FISH CARMARTHEN, 1604

See:http://digidol.llgc.org.uk/METS/MST00001/frames?div=1&subdiv=0&locale=en&mode=reference

Thanks to Richard Colborne for the image below. Email of December 15th 2015.

A most strange and true report of a monsterous Fish, who appeared in the forme of a Woman, from her waste vpwards.
Imprinted at London for W.B.

Unexpected Ursidae
A Selection of Crypto Bears, hybrids and Behaviours

Carl P. Marshall

A Brief Overview of Known Extant Bear Species.

Bears are mammals of the taxonomic family **Ursidae**; classed as **caniforms**, or dog-like canivorans, with the **pinnipeds** (eared seals, earless seals, and walrus) being their closest living relatives. Only eight species of bears are extant however, they are widespread, appearing in a variety of habitats throughout the Northern Hemisphere and also partially in the Southern Hemisphere. They are found on the continents of North America, South America, Europe and Asia. Common characteristics include robust bodies with stocky legs, long snouts, shaggy hair, plantigrade paws with five non retractile claws and short tails. While the polar bear is mostly carnivorous and the giant panda is a specialist species feeding almost entirely on bamboo the remaining six species are omnivorous with varied diets.

Extant Bear Species

Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus*

Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*

Spectacled Bear *Tremarctos ornatus*

American Black Bear *Ursus americanus*

Brown Bear or Grizzly Bear *Ursus arctos*

Polar Bear *Ursus maritimus*

Asiatic Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*

Giant Panda *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*

With the exception of courting individuals and mothers with their young bears are typically solitary animals, they are generally diurnal (active during daylight) but they may be nocturnal (active at night) and crepuscular (active during twilight) particularly around humans. All bears possess a fantastic sense of smell and, despite their heavy build and awkward gate, are adept runners, climbers and swimmers. In Autumn some species forage large amounts of fermented fruits which effects their social behaviour! Bears use shelters, such as caves and burrows

Above: Fig 1 Black Bear.

Fig 2 Dre-mo

as their dens; some species occupy these dens during the winter for a long period (up to 100 days) of deep sleep similar to hibernation.

This may all seem typical but occasionally in natural history, as in science as a whole, things are not always so clear cut and this article aims to address some of these rare occurrences.

A Selected Sample of Abnormal Bear Reports

Atlas Bear

Atlas bear is the name given to likely extinct populations of brown bear sub species *Ursus arctos crowtheri* in Africa. Smaller than the American black bear *U. Americanus* but far more robust; black or dark in colour with hair 4 - 5 inches long and a long muzzle. Its known distribution was the Atlas mountains and neighbouring areas from Morocco to Libya. A specimen, described by Edward Blyth, was killed south of Tetouan, Morocco, in 1834 but unfortunately was not preserved. Jules Rene Bourguignat discovered fresh bones in caves in the Djurdjura mountains in Algeria in 1867 and collected stories about the living animal from local people.

Bergman's Bear

Bergman's bear is an alleged and possibly extinct variety or subspecies of brown bear reported from East Asia in the Kamchatka Peninsula. Its physical description is black in colour with short fur and extremely large weighing approximately 1,100 - 2,500 pounds. Swedish zoologist Sten Bergman (1895-1975) determined that the bear was a separate subspecies after examining a strange looking hide very different to local bears and a series of large footprints, measuring 14.5 x 10 inches which he thought were larger than other bears on Kamchatka. In 1960 Hunter Rodian Sivolobov reported claims by Kamchatka locals of an unusually large bear they called either the Irkuiem or the God bear due to the animals unusually large size. Brown bears vary considerably in appearance and the pelt studied by Bergman may have simply been a variant of the Siberian brown bear U. a. beringianus rather than a distinct subspecies.

The Dremo

The *Dremo* is a mysterious bear or primate reported from Eastern Tibet and Bhutan in Central Asia which is often, rightly or wrongly, confused with the

Yeti. The Sino-Tibetan word *dremo* apparently has several different meanings such as, a female demon, a religious person who's lost their faith, a sow bear and the red and blue varieties of the brown bear. A significant sighting took place in July 1986 when famed mountaineer , Reinhold Messner, encountered a large, dark-furred animal that emerged from rhododendron bushes at high altitude about 30ft ahead of him. It rose up on its hind legs, turned, and then ran away on all fours. Local Tibetans told him it was a *Chemo*, a local name attached to their version of the Yeti legend.

Macarena bear

The Macarena bear is an alleged unknown bear from South America. It is described as large with red fur reported from Serrania de la Macarena, Meta department, Colombia. The spectacled bear exhibits a wide variety of individual variations in general colour and facial markings and may be responsible for some sightings. Its colouration ranges from pure black to dark reddish-brown, and it is found throughout the Andes Mountains in Western Colombia.

MacFarlane's Bear

MacFarlane's bear is a name applied to an alleged variety of bear of northern Canada. The scientific name *Vetularctos inopinatus* was proposed by C. Hart Merriam in 1918.

Its physical description is whitish buff to pale yellowish buff, darkening to pale reddish brown on the underside, a broad head with ears set a little like a dogs and a square long muzzle. The animals teeth are unlike the brown bears presenting a combination of long canines and well developed cusps with broadly flattened surfaces; the cusps of the upper first and second molars are reduced, while the lower second molar lacks the posterior cusp and notch. It is wide at the shoulders and has hair on the bottom of its paws!

The only known specimen was killed near Rendezvous Lake in the north-west territories by Inuit hunters on June 24th, 1864. The skin and skull were obtained by Roderick MacFarlane and shipped to the Smithsonian Institution, where its morphology was examined by C. Hart Merriam.

In the late nineteenth century, Caspar Whitney heard of a type of bear in the Canadian north that resembled a cross between a polar bear and a grizzly and in 1943, Clara Helgason reminisced about an incident many yearsearlier on Kodiak Island Alaska, where a large, yellowish-white bear with hair on the soles of its paws was shot.

Many researchers have proposed surviving short-faced bears *Arctodus simus*, an immense fossil bear and the largest North American carnivore of the Ice Age. C. Hart Merriam thought the dentition of the specimen resembled *Arctodus* and its

living relative the spectacled bear *Tremarctos ornatus* more than *Ursus sp.*

A more likely identity might be polar bear / brown bear hybrids which sometimes, although rarely, do occur in the wild.

Nepalese tree bear

In Nepal there is said to be a small species of bear distinct from the Asiatic black bear of which it resembles but is much smaller, known to locals as sano reech. A living specimen of this alleged animal was apparently once kept at Kathmando Zoo.

Pygmy Brown Bear

The pygmy brown bear is a very small brown bear reported from Peru but that has never been substantiated. Sometimes thought of by cryptozoologists as a species descended from the short-faced bears or a pygmy variety of the brown bear. Usually animals in the tropics are generally smaller than their northern kin, so it wouldn't be unreasonable for a South American brown bear to be smaller than a grizzly or Kodiak.

The Bear With a Blue Head from Silvermere Lake in Mission, BC.

A strange blue headed bear caused quite a stir recently when photos of the strange animal and its normal coloured cub started the rounds on social media leaving many people wondering if it was a strange unknown mutation, or whether the animal had somehow got paint or berry juice all over its head and snout. After viewing the images closely I personally feel this unfortunate bear has probably got blueish paint over it somehow and that it had probably been cruelly shot at with a paintball gun.

Behaviour

As noted above, most bears follow similar behavioural patterns, and display typical morphological traits, but on occasion a bear will present itself that does not follow the rules.

Bears, like humans, have a varied "critical space" area - an area around them that they may defend. Once you have entered a bear's critical space, you have forced the bear to act by either running away or becoming aggressive, and the size of of this area varies depending on the personality of the individual bear, much as in human psychology. Although black bears *U. americanus* and grizzly bears *U. arctos* do share common traits, its important to understand the difference in the way they react to perceived threats. Each species has evolved different strategies for survival. Black bears, for instance, are usually less aggressive and more tolerant of human activity. They often live near human settlements and are often extirpated from heavily used or

highly populated areas.

Black bears are fantastic climbers! When a black bear is threatened it usually tries to escape the perceived threat often by climbing a high tree. With her cubs out of danger, a female black bear or sow doesn't have to make vigorous defences that risk potential injury. Although black bears tend to retreat from humans, they are still incredibly strong and can cause serious, sometimes fatal injuries.

Today, brown (or grizzly) bears tend to live in coastal or mountainous forests, but they originally evolved in almost treeless habitats that influenced their behavioural response to threats. For instance, they are much more likely than black bears to become aggressive when encountered by humans. As previously mentioned a black bears first line of defence is to retreat, but grizzlies, especially sows with cubs, can become extremely aggressive towards other bears and also people and property. And contrary to popular belief grizzlies are not the best tree climbers, though its important to note they *can* and *will* climb trees! Grizzly sows usually defend their cubs on the ground rather than to send them up a tree as a *U. americanus* would.

The Polar x Grizzly hybrid

A polar-grizzly (also known as a pizzly or grolar bear) is a rare hybrid that has occurred both in the wild and in captivity. In 2006, the occurrence of this introgressive hybrid in nature was confirmed by testing the DNA of a strange looking bear that had been shot in the Canadian Arctic. Possible wild-bred polar-grizzly hybrids have been reported and shot before, and were certainly no surprise to most cryptozoologists, but DNA tests then available could now verify the bears ancestry and incidentally these results have offered an identity to a few cryptids . Analysis of the DNA sequences of bears have recovered multiple instances of introgressive hybridisation between various bear species including the introgression of polar bear DNA into brown bears during the pleistocene epoch.

With many suspected sightings and three verified cases, theories of how such hybrids might naturally occur have become more than just hypothetical. Although these two species are genetically similar and often found in the same territories, they tend to avoid each other in the wild and actually occupy different ecological niches. Grizzlies (and also Kodiak bears and Alaskan brown bears, which are all sub-species of the brown bear *Ursus actos*), tend to live and breed on land. Polar bears *U. maritimus* prefer the water and ice, usually breeding on the ice.

The yellowish-white pelage of MacFarlane's bear mentioned earlier and known only from a single specimen acquired in 1864, seems to attest that hybrids between these species have always occurred from time to time. Another theory however suggests that polar bears have been driven southward by the melting of the ice cap, bringing them into closer contact with grizzlies.

Conclusion

The Dre Mo or Dremo is usually considered to be a strange bear by eastern Tibetans and at this point in our investigation is best not be confused with the Chemo, which has been suggested to be the same creature as the Yeti elsewhere in Tibet, which is of course still speculation! The Dremo however, is categorically considered a bear! This has been reiterated recently by Professor Brian Sykes et al of the University of Oxford with the apparent discovery of the introgression of prehistoric polar bear DNA into brown bear populations. It is open to interpretation what appearance these atypical bears would present as locals who have witnessed them who are familiar with bears and other Tibetan wildlife positively affirm it to be an ape/human like animal. The blue or horse variety of brown bear is found in Eastern Tibet and Sichuan Province, China and may have also been involved in confusing the matter further! The Chemo may refer to the Yeti or Dzu-Teh while the Dre Mo is usually considered a strange, yet true bear!

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Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia.

Ilustration by Maureen Ashfield

I found another mystery bear story after Carl had sent me his completed text.
The Hong Kong Telegraph July 30th 1902

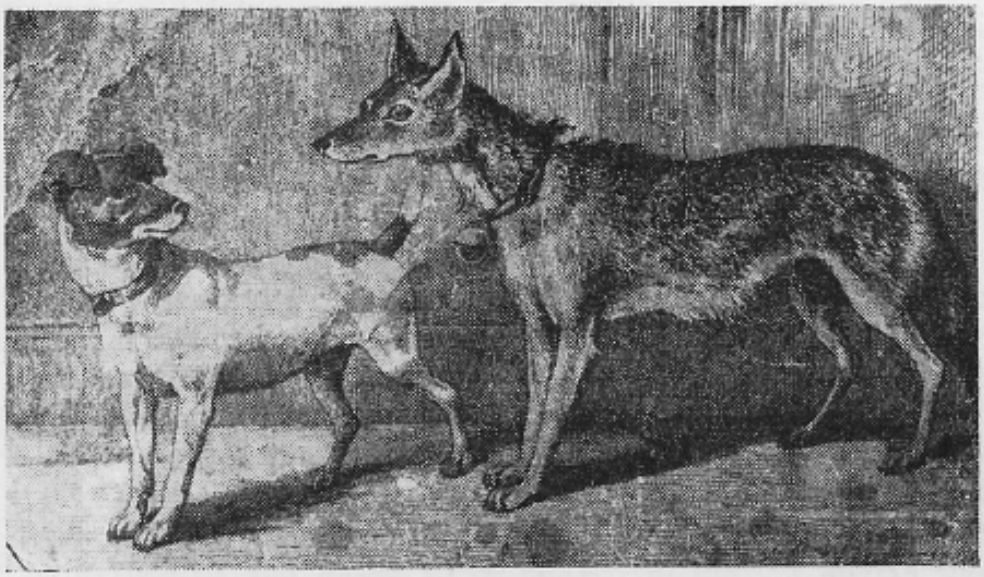
A STRANGE ANIMAL

The Kulu correspondent of the Lahore paper writes thus of a mysterious wild beast that is haunting the neighbourhood:- "The,as yet unidentified,animal in the south-west part of the valley, keeps on breaking open cowsheds and killing cattle, and a party of Rohilla sepoys have been sent from Mundi with orders to shoot . Its latest iniquity was to drag the carcase of a bullock all round the precincts of a temple, and eat it on the very temple steps. The natives declare that , when attacked by dogs, it gets rid of assailants in a very ingenious manner by pelting them pieces of beef ,and while the dogs,which are generally half starved, are enjoying this most unexpected and extremely welcome supper, it makes good its escape. Wood cutters state that, on more than one occasion, they have come across an entirely new kind of beast in the jungles – a very large bear,head,body and hind-quarters black,chest, forelegs and belly brown, like a red-bear. If this is true, it looks like a cross between the black and brown bear, a hybrid I never heard of before. Another woodman`s story that he saw this half-caste attacked simultaneously by two black bears , both of which it killed by knocking them over the edge of the "khud!"

Wolf in Essex

The Countryman Summer 1956

Thanks to Bob Skinner



A Wolf in Essex

THE caption 'Prairie Wolf from Epping Forest' under this picture in an old newspaper cutting looked strange and exciting when I turned it up among family papers. On investigation, however, it proved to be rather misleading. The wolf was not a wild one but a pet belonging to my grandfather Richard Payze of Leytonstone, Essex, who bought it from an animal store in Tottenham Court Road about seventy-five years ago. My father, now eighty-five, remembers Charlie well: he had the job of feeding him on raw sheep's paunches. Now and again the wolf would find a way out of his den in the stable-yard to raid the hen roosts, pouncing so quickly that hardly a cackle was heard. One day he went farther afield to the verge of Epping Forest close by the Green Man Inn, Leytonstone being only a small village then; and there was a great hue and cry of 'Wolves in the forest!' despite the fact that he was wearing a collar. With a dead fowl as bait and the enticing presence of my father's fox-terrier bitch Spot, who had become the wolf's inseparable companion, he was easily recaptured.

More interesting and perfectly authentic was the fact that Charlie and Spot ultimately mated and three male cubs were born — complete wolves in appearance with no visible trace of the dog strain. One died, another went to a private zoo in Kent and the third became my father's as the owner of Spot. He now admits that he sold it to Alderman Finnis, later Lord

Mayor of London, for a five-pound note — a fortune for a schoolboy. Neither of the surviving cubs bred when fully grown.

From the time the cubs were born Spot shared Charlie's den permanently and they lived together in complete harmony, though some nights when the moon was full the eerie sound of a wolf howling could be heard like a wail for lost freedom. They did not breed again and eventually my grandfather presented the pair to the London Zoo at the request of A. D. Bartlett, its superintendent, who had shown great interest in the strange mating. They lived there happily for two or three years until Spot died and Charlie became inconsolable. Very soon he, too, died — of a broken heart. — *V. Payze Blair*

The Mammals, Reptiles and Fishes of Essex- (Essex Field Club Special Memoirs, Vol 3)Henry Laver (Chelmsford, 1898) p. 54-5

SUPPOSED "WOLF" FROM ONGAR WOODS.

[**Canis** (*sp. incert.*). JACKAL.

A specimen of a supposed "Wolf" from Ongar Woods (where it was taken after 1862) is now in the Essex Field Club's Museum at Chingford. It was reputed to have been imported with young fox cubs. A notice of it, by the late Mr. Joseph Clarke, F.S.A., is printed in *Journ. Proc. Essex Field Club* (vol. iv., p. ccviii). A sketch of this specimen, by Mr. H. A. Cole, is here produced. Another notice of the supposed occurrence of this animal in Epping Forest appeared in *Land and Water* (July 19th, 1884, p. 64). It transpired afterwards that the experts had made a mistake; for further examination of evidence proved that the so-called Wolf was, in reality, a North African Jackal (*Journ. of Proc. Essex Field Club*, vol. iv., p. cciv.). Whatever the animal may have been, it cannot be claimed as a legitimate member of our Fauna; but, as there are very probably other individuals of the same species in existence in the Forest, it can hardly be passed over without mention.]

Journal of Proceedings of the Essex Field Club Vol 4 p. cciv-ccix (1891)

Modern Legends of Supposed "Wolves" in Epping Forest.*

"A shade on the stubble, a ghost by the wall,
Now leaping, now limping, now risking a fall,
Lop-eared and large-jointed, but ever alway
A thoroughly vagabond outcast in gray."—*Bret Harte.*

In late geological periods the wolf was common in the Epping Forest district, as is shown by the abundance of its bones in the peaty beds in the valley of the Lea [Trans. E. F. C., iii., p. 6]. In historic times there appear to be no records of the animal in the forest itself. It doubtless existed there, as in most other parts of England, for in a grant of lands by Edward the Confessor to Waltham Abbey, a "wolf-pit" and a "wolf-run" or "leap," are mentioned. In 1277 there was a presentment for wasting a grove called "Wolvesgrave" and the name of a manor in Barking called "Wolfhamston," may have had some connection with the animal [*see* Fisher's 'Forest of Essex,' p. 187]. But all traditions of wolves in Essex have ceased for so many centuries that it was startling to hear that a wolf had actually been captured in Epping Forest. True, this determination was incorrect, but the fact that the animal was one of three cubs (of presumably the same species) found in the forest gave rise to much speculation as to their origin. For some time previously rumours were current in the forest districts of the strange behaviour of some supposed foxes in the forest in the neighbourhood of High Beach, which were said to attack lambs, biting off the tails and leaving the mangled bodies in the fields, sometimes, it was said, half-buried in the earth. Also, there were stories of a large fox in Theydon Woods, with a whitish tail, which always got away from the hounds.

The story of the actual discovery of the cub (or cubs) cannot be better told than in the words of Mr. A. D. Bartlett, the well-known Superinten-

* This article was compiled in the belief that the determination of the name of the animal (or animals, for the Chelmsford Museum specimen may be in the same case) as a "Prairie Wolf" was correct. We now (December, 1891) hear from Mr. Bartlett that the animal in the "Zoo" has turned out to be a North African Jackal [see *post* p. ccviii.] But we leave the facts as originally recorded, as they are not, of course, affected by the mistakes of the experts.—Ed., December, 1891.

dent of the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, who wrote as follows to 'Land and Water' for July 19th, 1884 :

"Some short time since a gentleman called upon me at the gardens and offered to present to the Society an animal that he believed to be a prairie wolf. He mentioned some particulars concerning its history that caused me not at once to accept his offer, fearing that the animal might prove to be a useless mongrel. At the same time I asked his address, and promised to call and see the animal. Accordingly, I went to Leytonstone, and on my arrival I inquired for Mr. R. Payze, and found the gentleman who had so kindly offered the animal in question. He was very pleased to meet me, and introduced me to what I at once pronounced to be a veritable prairie wolf (*Canis latrans*).* The history of this animal I give as near as possible in Mr. Payze's words. In the month of May last year some men who were on their way to London with cartloads of hay told him, on their coming through some part of Epping Forest ["near Ongar," is the locality given in some narratives], they had found or caught three fox cubs, and they had them in a sack tied to the tail of the cart. Believing them to be fox cubs, he bought one of them for a few shillings, and the men went on their way towards London. The animal was at that time so small that it could be put into a pint pot, and I have every reason to believe the following narrative will fully explain what otherwise would appear a mystery. Mr. Payze introduced me to Mr. Swan (who was formerly a servant to Colonel Howard), and he told me that some few years ago four cubs were brought to England in a ship belonging to Mr. J. R. Fletcher, of the Union Docks, and were turned down (supposed to be fox cubs) in Ongar Wood, which joins Epping Forest. These cubs were brought home in a box and kept for a few days at Colonel Howard's, Goldings, Loughton. They were then taken to Mr. Arkwright's, formerly master of the Essex Hunt, and were turned out at Marl's Farm, and the man Swan was present when they were turned out. I have also beeen informed that from time to time an animal, supposed to be a large gray fox, has been hunted, but never caught, always escaping into the forest. I think it highly probable that some of the same kind as the animal now in the gardens still exist in the forest, as this species of wolf is not much larger than a large male fox, and not having any scent like the fox, would not be likely to get killed by foxhounds or followed any great distance by them."

The editor of 'Land and Water' supplemented this account as follows :

"Subsequently, in company with Mr. Bartlett, we visited Epping Forest ; and from the inquiries made we have little doubt as to the fact of the animal in question having been born in the forest. Swan and other persons who have been acquainted with the forest for many years told us they well recollect the circumstance of the 'strange animals from foreign parts' being turned down, and we expect shortly to have further confirmatory evidence from others who were present on the occasion. When first born, the prairie wolf might readily be mistaken for a cub fox. Mr. Payze, who is a lover of animals, and has from time to time kept many tame foxes, was under the impression until quite recently that 'Charlie,' as the animal is called, was a fox. As it developed, however, he noticed several points quite distinct from the common fox, and as, moreover, the animal (although quite quiet with his children) showed unmistakable snappish tendencies towards strangers, he decided to consult Mr. Bartlett, with the result that the superintendent

* This determination was not correct, see *post*.—Ed.

of the Zoological Gardens has pronounced it to be, without doubt, a prairie wolf (*Canis latrans*). From the inquiries we made, we think there is every probability that the prairie wolf has bred pretty freely in the forest. The less-frequented parts of it are quite suited to the habits of the animal. There he can find plenty of food, and is comparatively free from molestation. Many old frequenters of the Epping woods told us they had seen 'curiously coloured fox cubs' which had been captured, while more than one informant spoke of the 'large gray fox' mentioned by Mr. Bartlett. The hay carriers, who are constantly going to and fro, are keen poachers. Passing through the forest during the night and early morning, they let no opportunity escape to capture anything that comes in their way. We know as a matter of fact that numbers of cub foxes and other animals are taken by the hay carters every year. If they are not disposed of on their way, they are taken to Leadenhall Market, where they are readily sold; and it is highly probable many a cub prairie wolf has been sold in London as a cub fox. A case in point is furnished by Mr. Payze, who, although he has kept many foxes from time to time, was quite willing to accept this prairie wolf as a cub fox when offered to him."

Subsequently a writer in the 'St. James's Gazette' for 25th November, 1885, gave some further particulars :—

"* * * * * * * A strange quadruped had been often seen by the botanist and collector whilst searching the most unfrequented portions of the forest for rare plants, insects, or birds. Then, too, the peculiar bark or howl of the coyote had been heard. Moreover, 'a large dark-coloured fox with a bad brush' had been repeatedly seen dashing across some glade when the poacher was returning home or the labourer going early to work in the summer morning. Not many weeks ago a friend of the writer saw what at the time he said was no fox, as it hurriedly crossed a 'drive,' and was at once lost in the thick undergrowths of bracken and brushwood.

"The cub found near Ongar was brought up as a pet, well nurtured and cared for; and, with the fox-terrier puppy as one playmate and Mr. Payze's little son for another, it grew and grew until maturity was reached. Quite as companionable as a dog, it followed at Mr. Payze's heels; went into the village with him; and, if startled or alarmed there, 'Charlie' darted home to his kennel with the sped of a deer, clearing the gates and walls in a surprising manner for an animal of its size. Always somewhat vicious with strangers, increasing age made it more so. Rough-coated dogs became its abomination; and cats it appeared to love only when it could snap pieces out of them—pieces which the beast promptly swallowed. Next the poultry had to be kept under lock and key; and Mr. Payze's prize goats were not safe from attack. At last, therefore, the edict went forth for banishment. Mr. Bartlett at the Zoological Gardens was communicated with; and here the 'Epping Forest wolf' may now be seen pacing his cage, and displaying all the ferocity of his cousins in the dens adjoining, evidently forgetful of the education of his cub-hood. This change was gradual; for he has been in the gardens over twelve months, and after only a few weeks' incarceration he recognised the call of his late owner when he paid a visit to the gardens.

"Within four months of the present time the little fox-terrier bitch to which allusion has already been made went on a visit to her former playmate, and when the two were in the cage together mutual recognition took place. They fawned on each other, and played together as they had often done before; and this was the more remarkable inasmuch as Charlie had previously shown the utmost ill-temper whenever a dog

approached him. So they romped and fed together for a fortnight, when the terrier was removed home. On the 17th of October five puppies were born, which in colour altogether resembled their male parent; being a dull fawn, with a tinge or shade of black running along the back, a modicum of white occasionally showing on the breast, feet, or tip of the tail. As they grew up, a little alteration took place, some of the young ones more than others showing the attributes or character of the wolf in the erect ears and wild crafty countenance; others, again, to the casual observer might have seemed ordinary mongrel-bred puppies. Age must no doubt produce further changes; and it will be interesting to note whether these hybrids will in their turn be prolific. * * * The sire to the puppies in question is a little under 20 lbs. in weight; the mother about 17 lbs. At least one of these interesting hybrids is to be deposited at the Zoological Gardens, where the public will be able to see it. The common wolf freely mates with the dog; the progeny in nine cases out of ten inheriting only the worst attributes of its parents."

We are glad to hear that "Charlie" is still (December, 1891) alive and well at the Zoological Gardens. Mr. R. Payze writes (30th November, 1891):—

"I twice paired him with a fox-terrier bitch, and had five cubs each time. The only one of these that I know to be alive is at Mr. J. Brown's, Wanstead. The mother was lemon-colour and white, but the cubs were just like the father. The cubs were nasty spiteful animals, having the bad temper of both parents, and the good qualities of neither."

Before publishing the above, we fortunately communicated with Mr. Bartlett (the Superintendent of the Zoological Gardens), and he wrote as follows under date December 3rd, 1891:—

"The animal you ask about is alive. At the time it came here, we considered that it was a 'Prairie Wolf,' but we now find that it is a North African Jackal. The two species are very much alike, differing only in size. 'Charlie,' as we call him, bred with a fox-terrier. The pups did not show much of the father [this does not quite accord with Mr. Payze's opinion, see above], but were most like the mother. They were not to be trusted; always running after sheep or any other animal."

The illustration is that which appeared in 'Land and Water' at the time, which has been kindly lent to us by the Editor.

This is not the first time that similar animals have been found in the forest. In the Chelmsford Museum is a specimen which was killed many years ago in the Ongar Woods after committing several depredations. It was supposed to have been imported in 1862 with other cubs, all thought to be young foxes. It was presented to the Museum by the late Rev. Merdaunt Barnard. Mr. Joseph Clarke, F.S.A., wrote to us as follows with regard to this specimen:—"Some twenty or twenty-five years ago an animal was sent to Saffron Walden to be mounted. I saw it but for a few minutes before it was packed for return to its owner. It was in a lying-down position, the fur was of a uniform drab-gray colour, its ears rather broad, and its nose much more obtuse than that of a fox. It was said at the time to be a young wolf, but I said, no! it was either a dingo or a mongrel. When I saw the portrait of the living animal from Epping Forest, which had been given to the Zoological Gardens (but it needed a Bewick to depict it!), I did not hesitate to

pronounce the two animals to be the same species. The specimen I saw at Walden is believed now to be in the Chelmsford Museum."

From the above facts there can be little doubt that the origin of the two Epping Forest strangers (be they jackals or prairie wolves) was similar—they were imported, as supposed fox cubs, for replenishing the stock of native "rascals" for the hunt. It is very probable that more than one existed in the forest (*circa* 1880-2), and that they did considerable damage. Remembering that "Charlie" was one of three cubs, it is possible that the animals bred in the forest or even that they paired with native foxes, whose "earths" are not uncommon in Monks Wood and elsewhere.

A report crept into the newspapers in 1886 that another "prairie wolf" had been killed near North Weald Station; but on seeing the animal, Mr. Bartlett pronounced it to be merely a common fox.

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—The first series of the 'Proceedings of the Essex Field Club' terminates with the present sheet. On and after January, 1887, the 'Transactions' and 'Proceedings' of the Club were combined and issued as a journal entitled 'The Essex Naturalist.']

Notes & Queries

BLACK WIDOW SPIDER FROM WORCESTERSHIRE CAMPER VAN

From Carl P Marshall by e-mail February 13th 2016

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3.

This Black Widow Spider *Latrodectus mactans* was found near Worcester has now been permanently re-homed at Stratford upon Avon Butterfly Farm after being discovered living beneath a VW campervan imported from Sacramento in California USA in late 2014. The extremely venomous visitor was collected and is now being cared for by the Butterfly Farms Curator of Insects and cryptozoologist Carl P. Marshall.

†

MACAO SEA MONSTER

South China Morning Post December 20th 1963

Sea Monster Reported in Macao

Macao, Dec 19th

Does Macao have its own sea monster? Reports from "sea monster experts" along the tree-shaded Praia Grande say it does. The monster described by some as looking a little like an alligator,is supposed to have been seen by various individuals sunning itself briefly on a rock outcropping by the sea wall in front of the residence of British Consul Mr Edward Howarth have never seen the "monster" . But they get many reports of it - enough to make them eye the rock suspiciously at

times. Amahs,who claim to have seen it,say it often opens up a tremendous pair of jaws,as though yawning.

It is reported that amahs and other domestic staff are seeking higher wages for working in homes which overlook the monster`s resting spot. It has been suggested that tourist agencies should try to exploit the reported sightings. No other place in the world can boast of being able to offer Portuguese chicken, a look at China`s border, and a sea monster - Our Own correspondent.

SOUTHWOLD MONSTER CRAB

On Thursday the 12th inst., an enormous crab, with claws measuring five feet was caught on the beach in this town. It was found with a long rope attached to it, and was conveyed in a cart (having previously had its claws detached) to the Town Hall, where it may be viewed by the curious of crustacean research.

Halesworth Times: September 1857

http://www.pipwright.com/Newspapers_in_Suffolk_1851_1875.htm

NEW SPECIES OF CRAB IN BRIGHTON

Manchester Courier February 19th 1907

According to this newspaper thousands of purple crabs, a new species,were found between the two piers at Brighton.

GREEN DOG CRAZE

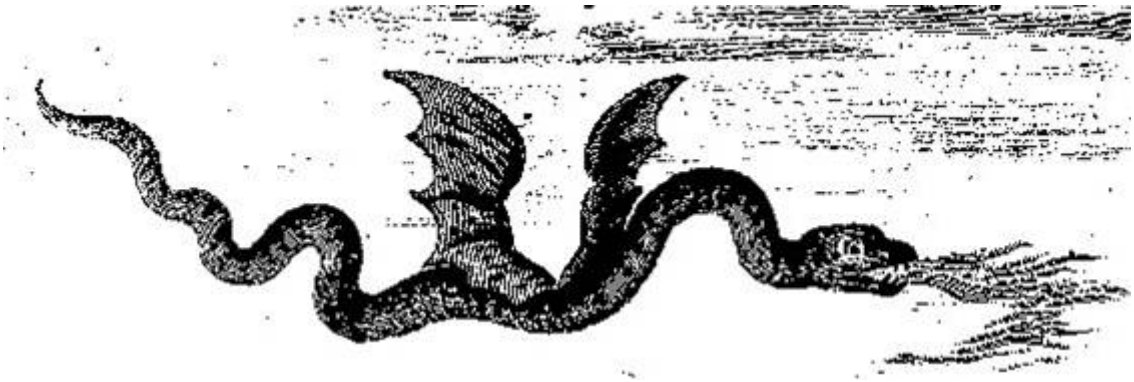
Grass Green Dog is Society`s New Whim

November 27th, 1910 San Jose Mercury News

"Now comes the grass green dog society`s latest whim. Ever since the first monkey dinner new fads have been arriving so rapidly that the point has now been reached where it is almost impossible to tell from week to week what the feminine members of the `400` will be doing next…And now comes the grass green dog. It is made of wood with a long tail and painted an emerald colour, and in all the appearances of its mistress in fashionable places it is carried, tightly clasped under the left arm. Thus far the grass green dog , which is an importation from abroad, accompanying thousands of returning society women,has escaped the tariff..."

CRYPTIDS FROM A WEB SITE ON ITALIAN LAKE MONSTERS

Thanks to Kay Coggin



A SHOWER OF CATS

Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918), Saturday 19 August 1876, page 1

A SHOWER OF CATS.

This is the latest phenomenon on record; and nobody can account for it. As a matter of course, it happened in America. Everything that is extraordinary always does. Newspaper reporters and editors never get a chance in this country. Ours is the pursuit of journalism under difficulties. Startling incidents—incidents to wax eloquent over—incidents which would become the talk of the whole of the colonies, take a perverse pleasure in occurring somewhere in the United States. It was in Van Ness street, in the City of San Francisco, that a respectable family was seated in the placid enjoyment of tea and shrimps, or, it might be, prawns, when a loud pattering was heard on the roof, accompanied by the last despairing cry of a death-doomed tom-cat, in mortal agony. What follows must be told in the spirit-stirring language of the editor of the *New York Times*, who devotes a leading article to the thrilling narrative :—

"The pattering and the cries increased, and a shower of heavy objects fell from the eaves and rattled on the pavement below. The whole family rushed to the front piazza, and by the increasing light of the full moon beheld scores of cats pouring from the roof. Cats of all sizes and colors were sliding over the shingles and turning wild somersaults in the air. At one moment a gigantic tom-cat would clutch at the pitiless gutter-pipe, and failing to break his fall, would shoot, meteor-like, with outstretched tail, through the astonished night, and impale himself on the iron spikes of the front fence. At another moment a staid tortoise-shell tabby, of untarnished reputation, would make the fatal plunge, uttering blasphemous and blood-curdling yells, until she brained herself on the brick pavement. The horrified family fled to the cellar, where they passed the night in denouncing the Weather Bureau, in vainly attempting to convince their Eastern guest that an occasional cat-shower in no way detracted from the unequalled excellence of the California climate, and in searching a pocket New Testament for the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The shower did not last more than fifteen minutes, although it sprinkled cats at intervals until morning. When daylight came, every fence-spike was ornamented with an impaled cat, and the yard was so thickly strewn with the dead and wounded that an experienced meteorologist, who subsequently investigated the affair, reported that at least eight inches of cats had fallen during the night. The theory put forth by this sceptical man of science in order to account for the shower hardly needs to be refuted. He invented a small boy, whom he accused of greasing the roof with imaginary butter, which caused some hundreds of cats, assembled on the ridge-pole with a view to singing the praises of love and mice, to lose their footing. Inasmuch as he failed to produce either the boy or the butter, and also failed to explain how a boy could keep his footing on a greased roof, where the most skilful cat, even with the aid of four feet and a full set of claws, could not maintain a position, we can only pity the weakness and despise the effrontery of the scientific sceptic."

Let us hope this momentous question will be taken up by the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco; for it is a terrible thing that such phenomena should remain unexplained; and that people should not be instructed by science how to guard against their recurrence: —"Delay is dangerous." While we are yet speaking a wave of atmospheric cats may be approaching us from the Gulf; light showers of wasps and mosquitos may be about to descend upon the New England and Middle States, and an area of cosmical pigs may be threatening the region of the lakes."—*M. and D. Advertiser.*

Frank Gardiner.—A 'Frisco correspondent of an Adelaide journal, writing on the 21st of June, says:—"I saw a well-known Australian yesterday, viz., Frank Gardiner, the once noted and feared bushranger. He is keeping the Twilight Star, Kearney-street, which is a very small drinking shop. It seems to be kept very orderly by him. Gardiner looks a man of about forty years. He does not seem to enjoy very good health, and complains of rheumatism. He says that bushranging is 'played out.'"

Roundabout Curse.—George Dawson, in a recent speech, told a story of a Gloucestershire peasant's heroic curse. He had wrestled for a long time with a very tough piece of oak, on which he had been unable to make any impression, and at last burst out with the imprecation, "Curs they pigs that didn't eat thee when thou was a acorn!"

Topping Him Over.—A Mr Topp, of Sturminster, Newton, advertises that he will not be responsible for any debts incurred by his wife, Elizabeth. Immediately following this is a defiance from Elizabeth herself, who states she doesn't intend to incur any liabilities, and doesn't believe that if she did he has the means of discharging them.

It is mentioned as a singular fact that Solomon never laughed, and was a very melancholy man. It should be remembered, however, that he had nine hundred wives to advise him what to do when he had a sore throat.

ANOTHER FALLING TURTLE

Following on from the story of a falling turtle in China in F.S #9, I found the following in the Repository (Ohio) of August 25th 1884:

" The story of the alleged miraculous meteorological manifestation – to wit: the falling of a turtle in a rain shower in this city – escaped from Canton before it could be caught by the perpertrators , and is one of the wonders of the day. The New York Tribune of Saturday had a special dispatch about it. It says: " A two and a half pound snapping turtle fell from the sky with such force that its shell was cracked. It rebounded like a ball. It is still alive." It will go bounding down the ages more than it bounded Friday."

LIZARDS FROM HONG KONG TRANSPORTED TO CALIFORNIA

From: http://ernielb.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/alligator-lizards-and-others.html

Ekovox said...May 21st, 2010 at 9:13 p.m.

Ah yes, alligator lizards....up over the ridge we used to use them to guard our vegetable gardens.

You see, when the Chinese miners came to our region, they brought the lizards from Hong Kong and Mongolia as camp watch dogs, er, watch lizards. As you have stated, the hiss was the warning they would give just prior to the lunge and grasp onto the victim. Quite vicious little suckers.

They were bred to be tame and sometimes you'll see one of the K-T old timers carry one on his shoulder like a parrot on a pirate. By the way, don't eat them, even if you are hungry. The acrid, bitter flavor is akin to wild cucumber. No, they don't taste like chicken.

[I think these Chinese miners were gold miners in California in the 1850s and `60s and came from the Hong Kong area .I found this info in a blog,for url see page here. But I found no reference to alligator lizards being in Hong Kong in any web site. - Rich].

Northern alligator lizard From: Wikipedia Commons

Source: http://www.bio.sdsu.edu/pub/spiders/Spring06/Spring06.html

CHINESE PORCELAIN IMAGE IN IRELAND

The News Palladium September 24th 1924

Via Kay Coggin and Bob Skinner

FASCINATING HISTORY

In Ireland they find more of the mysterious porcelain images of apes which have been dug up over there, 50 found since year 1780, in widely scattered places.

Chinese scholars claim these porcelain images are of Chinese origin, including their particular hieroglyphics, and date back to the year 500 B. C. How did they get to Ireland? Did Chinese explorers travel that far? The ancient history of China, as it comes to light, will be fascinating.

ANCIENT CHINESE COINS IN CHESHIRE AND WALES - 2013 and 2014

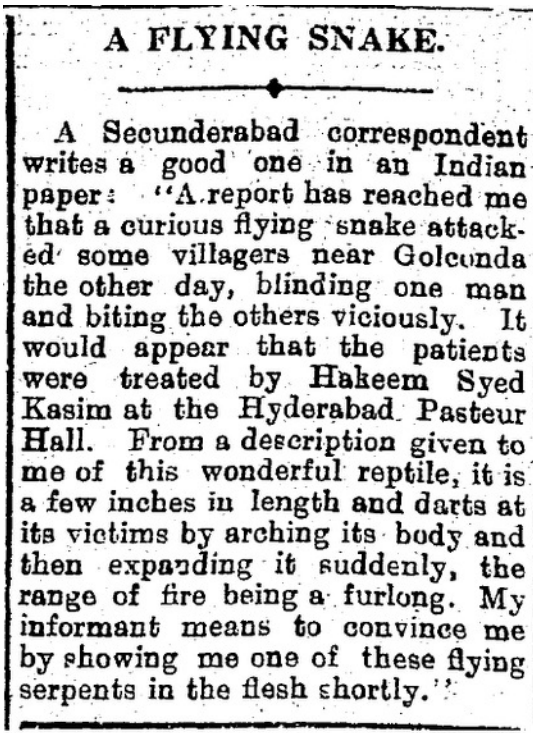
On the UK and European Metal Detecting Forum web site [1] I found the following post by someone calling him or herself iexplore. Dated June 23rd 2014:

CHINESE COIN IN NORTH WALES?! I popped out earlier for a couple of hours today…Turned on my machine,walked 10 steps and out popped the following from around 4 inches or so below?! Not what I was expecting to find today in a field in North Wales1 And ideas on how old it is (same size as a modern UK penny)?

lord lovell replied on the same day - There`s loads of types of these most are 19th or 20th century.

Stuart900 commented on June 23rd:

Hi Iexplore, Its surprising what you can turn up in this hobby. I`ve found a Chinese cash coin in the middle of a pasture field on the outskirts of Chester in March this year and had another on the beach at Colwyn Bay last year.



A FLYING SNAKE.

A Secunderabad correspondent writes a good one in an Indian paper: "A report has reached me that a curious flying snake attacked some villagers near Golconda the other day, blinding one man and biting the others viciously. It would appear that the patients were treated by Hakeem Syed Kasim at the Hyderabad Pasteur Hall. From a description given to me of this wonderful reptile, it is a few inches in length and darts at its victims by arching its body and then expanding it suddenly, the range of fire being a furlong. My informant means to convince me by showing me one of these flying serpents in the flesh shortly."

FLYING SNAKE IN INDIA

South China Morning Post July 21st 1923

[1] http://www.metaldetectingforum.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=120&t=66099

A TALKING CAT

Oregonian December 15th 1912

TALKING CAT IS SENSATION

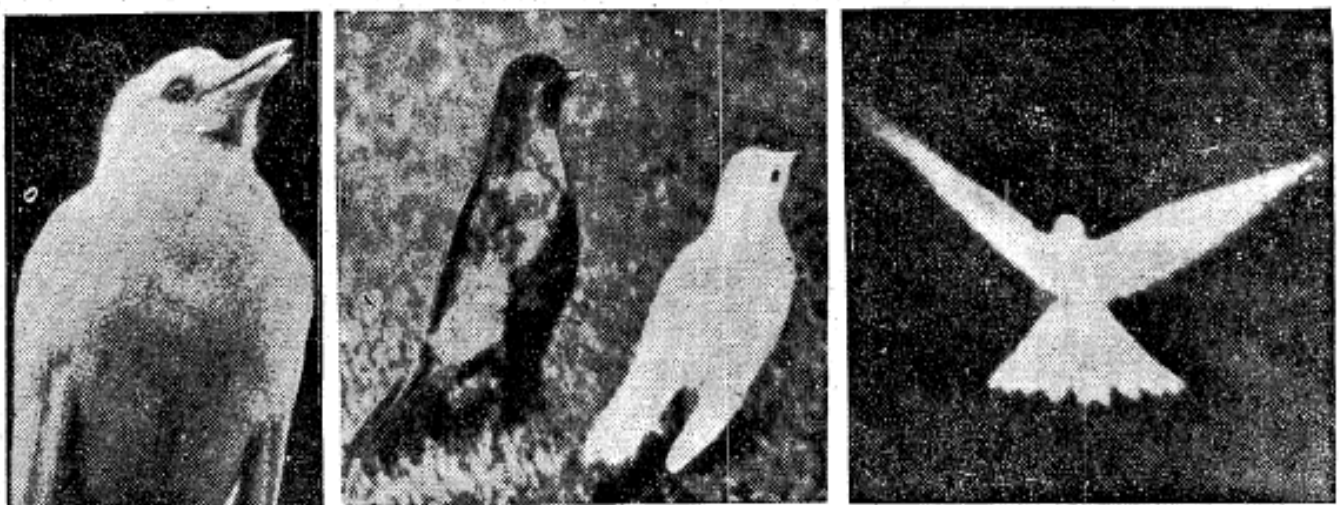
Scientists Wonder at Feline as at Famous Horse Hans.

BERLIN, Dec. 14. — (Special.) — A woman-dentist named Sutoris of Hamburg is exhibiting a talking cat named Peter, which is creating as great a sensation among scientists and the public generally as the famous horse Hans. Peter yells "hurrah, hurrah, hurrah" with unmistakable distinctness repeats the names "Anna" and "Helene" and screams "nine, nine, nine."

He finishes by singing a few words from a popular song. Frau Sutoris says she discovered the cat's talent when she trod on its tail and Peter yelled "nine."

ALBINO ROBIN Below: Heraldo de Brownsville (Brownsville, Texas) July 7th 1938

Found and Photographed at Last—A Perfect Specimen of Albino Robin



[I have removed the text accompanying these pictures as it is too small to read - Richard]

NEW WALLABY IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

At the end of November 2015 I spoke to a Cheshire taxidermist Kate Egan and she told me she had been handed a naturally deceased wallaby at the end of August 2015.

STRANGE ANIMALS IN NATIONAL PARK NEAR SANTA BARBARA CALIFORNIA 1943

The Milwaukee Journal February 20th 1943

Santa Barbara, California. One more strange animal has been added to the long list of odd ones that have been trapped or otherwise captured in Los Padres national forest. The list includes a wild boar with a snout like an elephant`s trunk, white coyotes, snow coloured deer and even an all-red blackbird. The latest capture in the forest was that of a monkey - and a tame one at that. Foresters are trying to locate its owner.

ST PETER IN BRITAIN

This subject was covered in F.S # 8 but I found out more in a rare book called Celt,Druid,Culdee by Isabel Hill Elder (1944) page 137.

“ The discovery, at Whithorn, of the stone known as the “Peter Stone”, seems to afford some support to the statements of these early writers[about the travels of the earliest apostles to Britain-Richard]. It is a rude pillar, four feet high and fifteen inches wide. An inscription in debased Roman capitals reads: “ LOC(VS) S(ANC)TI PETRI APOSTOLI” - “ The Place of St. Peter the Apostle.” St. Peter would be,therefore, to the people of Britain, a Culdich or “refugee” from Rome in the reign of Claudius, A.D. 41-54, arriving in Britain a few years after the arrival of the “Judean refugees” or Culdich (certain strangers) from Palestine in the last year of Tiberius, A.D. 37. The vision to which St Peter refers (2 Peter I, 14),”Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me,” is said to have appeared to him in Britain on the spot where once stood the British Church of Lambedr (St Peter) and now stands the Abbey of St Peter`s, Westminster.”

BOOK OF MIRACLES 1550

Thanks to Loes Modderman

FLYING PREHISTORIC BIRD, WYOMING 1926

A story appeared in 1926 of a strange pterosaur-like animal in the Casper Mountains area

In the Kaycee Optimist of September 17th, 1926:

BATES HOLE PRE-HISTORIC MONSTER IS SEEN IN SWEETWATER COUNTRY

Telephone Call to Independent Says That Tracks of the Mammoth Beast-Bird Have Been Seen In The Sweetwater Country While Casper Man Swears He Saw It Flying Around Near The Casper Mountains.

According to reports received, the Bates Hole prehistoric monster has started to wander over a larger territory. A cowboy in the Sweet country claims he has discovered fresh tracks down there and a Casper citizen says that last night he could plainly see some large monster flying around near the Casper Mountains. The big question is :"What is it?"As was told the last issue of The Independent the tracks were first discovered in the Bates Hole country but

a trip to that section by a representative failed to show any further evidence . The tracks were still there plainly showing a track with nine toes left by the back feet and a much smaller print, with only three toes left by the front feet of this strange beast bird. What is it? Is a question that may never be answered unless some one is fortunate enough to get a glimpse of the monster and live to tell the story.

The Sweet water cowboy who swears he had not taken a drink of "mountain dew" for weeks, riding home from a trip to see his sweet heart when his pony began to snort and plunge and seemed to be in morbid terror. Off in the distance the cow waddle could see something soaring away, several hundred feet up in the air. He claims that it appeared to have a wing span of at least thirty feet, and apparently glided more than flying. The pony continued to snort and jump,so he dismounted and examined the ground and found the same large foot prints. That cowboy who had always claimed to be afraid of nothing that walked, creeped or crawled says he left for some other place right quick.

STRANGE ATMOSPHERIC PHENOMENON

The Times October 11th 1786

In the year 1694,the country about Harlech,in Merionethshire,was annoyed above eight months by a strange fiery exhalation;it was seen only in the night, and consisted of a livid vapour, which arose from the sea,or rather seemed to come from Caernarvonshire, cross a bay of the sea, eight or nine miles broad, on the west side of Harlech;it spread from this bay over the land,and set fire to all the barns,stacks of hay,and corn on its way;it also infected the air,and blasted the grass and herbage that a great mortality of cattle, sheep,and horses ,ensued;it proceeded constantly to and from the same place in stormy,as well as calm nights, but more frequently in the winter than in the following summer;it never fired anything but in the night,and the flames,which were weak and of a blue colour,did no injury to the inhabitants,who frequently rushed into the middle of them to save their hay and corn. This vapour was at length extinguished by the blowing of horns,ringing of bells,and firing of guns, or by otherwise agitating the air, whenever it approached the shore. A like appearance was observed on the coast of France in the year 1734.

Letters or Emails

E-mail from Terry Hooper December 3rd 2015 on various matters including **TUATARAS,BIG CATS ETC**

Hi. Richard.

Coru Marten -I'll keep an eye out for that one[1] In fact, the Somerset, Devon, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire area has a few reports of, presumably re-introduced unofficially, creatures such as beavers. When I asked one police wildlife officer in 1998 about reports of "chocolate brown, otter like" animals from Somerset he went quiet then told me they -him and locals/landowner- knew what the animals were but I was told "You must NOT tell anyone -they've been surviving her over 40 years".

Quite rightly, locals protect a lot of animals they know live in their area. I was once cornered in a "quaint village pub" by thirty locals who wanted to know WHY I was trying to track down the sightings of "Ellie" -a local puma? I had to convince them I was not out to hunt it and then one spotted the EAR ID card on my clipboard: "You that Hooper? He's okay" and it seems the man was the local historian-naturalist and knew who I was. Apparently, "Ellie" was the (then) offspring of "Maisy" and Maisy was the offspring of "Duke" and "Sally". So I thought...what? He then explains that his great grandfather had told his father in the 1930s to keep out of certain sections of woodland "specially when kitts is about" and it then turned out "The Great Grey Cat" had first appeared in the woods back around 1900. Pumas.

I then had radio contact me about puma sightings in Pewsey, Wiltshire. I said leave them alone just get kids indoors along with pets when you see it but make lots of noise so it doesn't think its okay to get close to homes. I then had a phone call from a local who I had to convince I was NOT a "big cat hunter" as the radio said. He told me of sightings in the area and even mentioned "an old dear runs a farm at the far end of the village *walks about with a pitchfork in case she comes across them* again!" I then talked to the local historian, a local teacher who all told me that their parents and grandparents had instructed them on what to do if they came across one of these cats and where to avoid going. By the end of two days I knew puma had been in the area since, at least, 1930s. And then a woman phones me, VERY broad Wiltshire accent, and explains how the cats use a gulley beside her farm and how she had been walking along the road one day and turned a corner: a large grey puma was about ten feet from her. They stared at each other and both turned and ran in opposite directions "Twant shure whatch oor uz whud runnin fastest!" And she gave a great description. I asked if she wasn't worried about a similar confrontation? Not a moments hesitation: "*No. I do walk about with me pitchfork ifn I leaves th' farm"*

[1] I had told Terry about my local paper printing CORU Marten intead of CORN Marten

And this goes on all over the country. Local communities who know all these "Aren't There Animals" and I've even seen water colour paintings and pencil sketches made by peoples great grandmother or grandfather when they were young of some animal -signed, dated and in some cases gummed into diaries.

You can ask and beg but you'll never to even photo these images because *that* would prove the animal was there and the total hostility to hunting these animals is incredible. But if you look at fox-hunting (as you'll see in the book, farming communities were *never* big supporters.) That, I found out, is a common modern myth.

That said, I have the signed statement of a Lincolnshire farm owner who, a few years back (early 2000s) helped a DEFRA vet capture a panther. The farmer was angry and even complained to DEFRA (who denied anything had happened even though a policeman was a witness) because the vet injected and killed the cat.

It was after this final incident that DEFRA took me off the national advisers list -what happened then is a long and complicated story never to told over phone nor email! You know about the tuatara that were said to have been at Anglesey? Everyone though they had died out but in 2001 I talked to two locals who said a couple of these had scared the living daylights out of them because they had no idea what they were and thought they "might be poisonous"! A naturalist I knew was looking at gulls in that area and I joked with him about watching out for the "poisonous" lizards! He replied that you saw them, if they didn't see you first, sunning themselves on rocks. So in 2001 they were still there.

In 1998 I spoke to a Peak District ranger who told me that they thought all the wallabies had died: "Winters have been too harsh" but while looking at cat sightings in that area I had four reports in two days -"not sure if its of interest?"- of "one of those little kangaroos". In fact, by description and they were quite close to the witnesses, I could tell three different individuals had been seen. I phoned the ranger and explained all this and got a "Yeah. There are some still up there" and it seems he thought I was going to sell a big story to a newspaper and some hunters would be out trying to kill them. Once I got the local police wildlife crimes officer to phone him he was more cooperative. Seems *he* had not seen any himself but he got regular reports of them.

We have a country full of interesting local creatures that no one wants to talk about. I've heard of a possible road-kill wallaby but never heard of one in the hands of a taxidermist or I'd have been onto that! The flying snakes of Penllyn Castle Glamorganshire. Every source I found on that quoted the same story and source but I could never find any actual witnesses though I think 1906-1910 is supposedly the last time any were seen? I heard that so-and-so had a stuffed one that their grand dad had killed but "no, it vanished mysteriously after his death" and then there was the "scaly with feathers" and I had to wonder at one point whether the legend concerned an exotic bird of some kind? Certainly estate owners kept a wide variety of exotic fowl as well as deer and other creatures that were allowed to just roam estates. In some cases I believe it was hoped some would go wild and breed and make "good game". There are pheasants that *might* look scaled and are colourful but without texts/first hand descriptions from the time it's an interesting story.

Cheers

Terry

Some sea-serpent and lake-monster reports from old German newspapers

Ulrich Magin E-mail of November 10th 2015

A Monster in Pyramid Lake

From the New York Journal, we take the following: A Californian newspaper has an interesting report on the unravelling of a legendary lake-monster. For many years, Indians and prospectors were talking about the legend of a monstrous serpent which dwelled in Pyramid Lake, Humboldt County, Nevada. Although no white man had ever seen the monster, the Indians swore to high heaven it existed and could not at any cost be brought to go to the banks of the lake. Some time ago, a prospector reached the shores of the lake, tasted the water and found that it contained acidic borax salt. Happy about his discovery, he returned home and immediately organized a company to extract monstrous serpent which dwelled in Pyramid Lake, Humboldt County, Nevada. Although no white man had ever seen the monster, the Indians swore to high heaven it existed and could not at any cost be brought to go to the banks of the lake. Some time ago, a prospector reached the shores of the lake, tasted the water and found that it contained acidic borax salt. Happy about his discovery, he returned home and immediately organized a company to extract borax from the water of the lake. First, an analytical chemist named Spence was sent to carry out an accurate analysis of the lake water. He was accompanied by an assistant and had a boat with provisions. On 28 Sept. he reached the shore; the next day he took his boat afloat. The lake, 10-12 miles wide and 25 miles long, was as smooth as a mirror, but no trace of living beings was found in the water. Eight miles from the shore Spence saw an object which appeared to him to be a monstrous serpent. This supposed snake

was lying on the water's surface, apparently asleep, as it did not move. They approached it to within 300 feet and looked at it more closely. It seemed at least 300 feet long and the thickest part was 3 1/2 feet in circumference. The scales were black, white and copper-coloured. After some hesitation, Spence closed in on the monster and found that it was not a monstrous snake, but a tangle of millions of worms, which had heaped together. These worms belonged to a genus that was entirely new to Mr Spence and he believes they heap together in times of calm, but are driven apart again whenever the water is disturbed.

Freisinger Tagblatt, 17 December 1869

A Sea-Serpent off Dumfries *Bonplandia*, 1853, vol. 1, p. 63

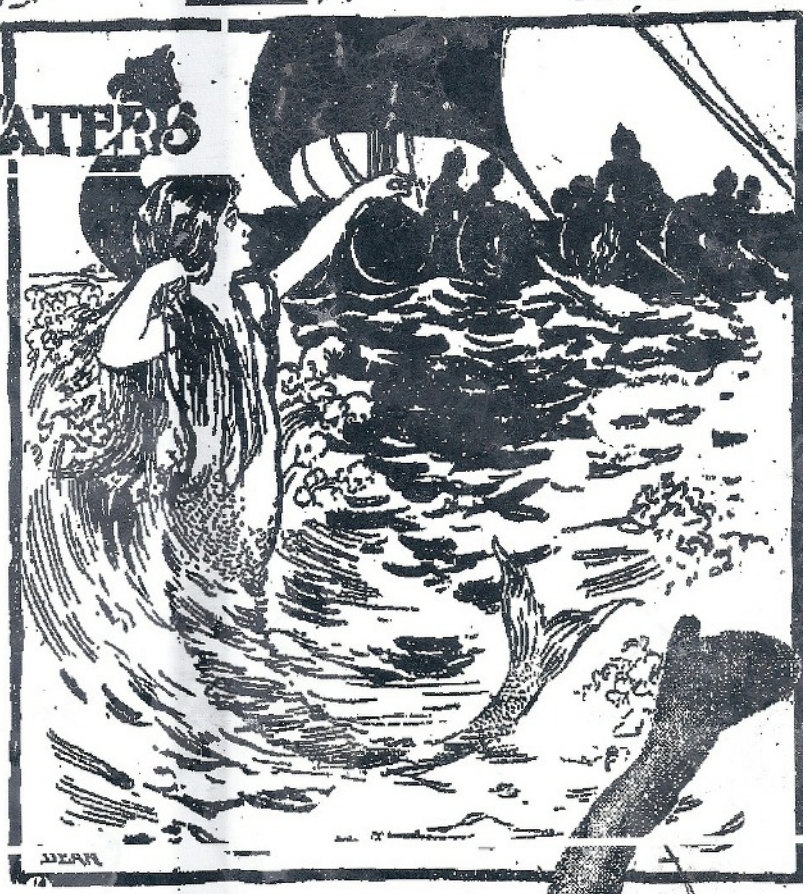
The great sea serpent. "A few days ago," says the Dumfries Courier, "a 38 foot long and 2 feet thick tree trunk was thrown ashore at Torduff Point, in the diocese of Graitney, which was completely overgrown with seaweed and covered by shells on the points. As the tree was moved up and down by the waves, and sometimes appeared above the surface and sometimes below it, while the wind blew through the weed so it appeared like a mane, and the shells made a hissing sound, many of the spectators who had assembled on the shore because of this strange spectacle believed they observed the great sea serpent." May not all reports of the sea monsters have their origin in a similar optical illusion?

A Venice Sea-serpent *Regensburger Zeitung*, 8 July 1860
An allegory on Garibaldi?

A Sea-Serpent. From Venice, June 30, a correspondent writes: In the past few days Venice has been in great excitement, and especially the audience eager for bathing is in disorder, for the famous sea serpent has reappeared. Yet this time there is some truth in the story, because several shots have been fired at the monster and posts have been established lie in wait for it. The rumours claim that same is a colossal snake, measures 7 feet according to some, and even 10 feet according to others, and which often shows on the sea shore. As said, the sentinels standing on the Lido have already shot several times at the monster, but without hitting same. Of course, by the desire to bath has been much muted and a bath in the sea is now regarded as a very courageous adventure. Hopefully the population will soon be calmed, and the monster either be killed or its aspirations denied in a proper manner. Of course, everyone now claims he has seen the monster with his own eyes, and to doubt the existence of same is considered madness, no matter what the truth may be. The fact is that due to the fear of being devoured by the monster bathing has completely stopped for some time on the sea shore, and the panic now has reached such heights that even in the inner canals of the lagoon there are far less swimmers than previously, because it is feared the sea serpent could change quarters.

HERE'S A MERMAID

CAPTURED *in* PHILIPPINE WATERS

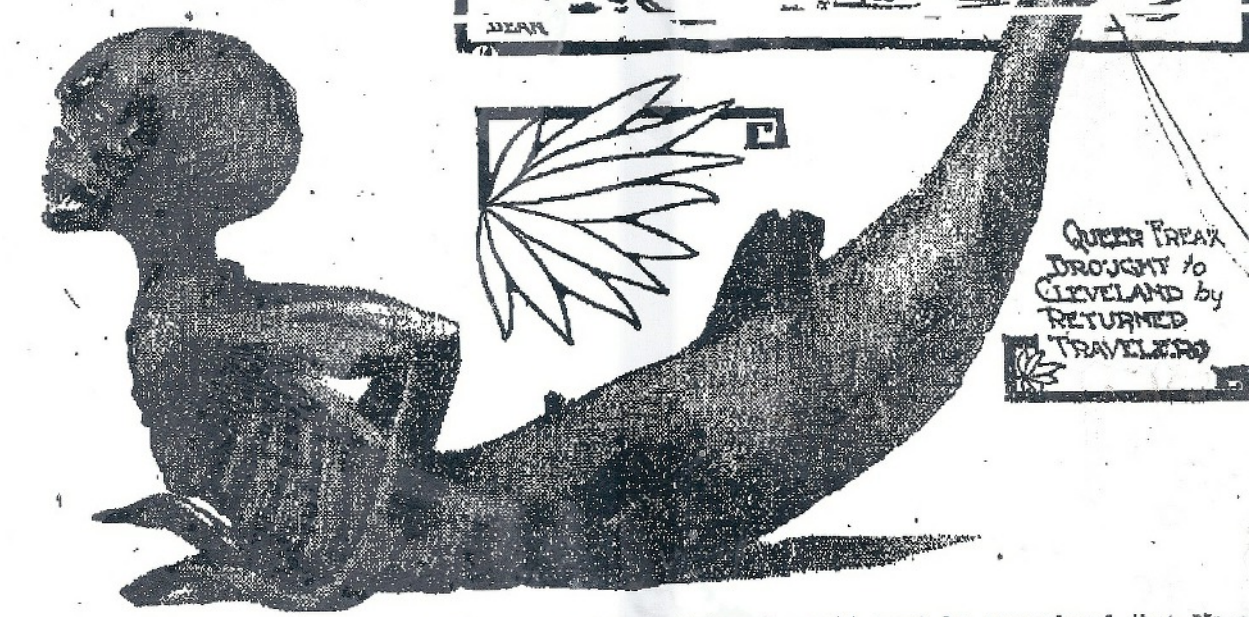


There is a real mermaid in Cleveland. She is in the window of a store on Woodland-av., and can be seen by anyone who will take the trouble to stop and gaze upon her. Unfortunately she is dead. But who ever saw a live mermaid, anyway?

The mermaid is mummified. Her owner, G. W. Bassett, got her from a friend who caught her in Manila bay back in 1900. To prove this statement, Mr. Bassett gives the date on which the mermaid was caught, May 5. He also gives her name, "Nana."

Nana, let it be known, is a combination of a fish and human being. She is a realization of one's ideas what a mermaid ought to be, except for one thing. She is not beautiful. It is impossible to conceive of any sailors, no matter how long at sea, risking their lives for a creature like Nana.

There is another drawback. She has no ears. Instead, there are porous membranes which connect with her lungs like gills of a fish, which enabled her to breathe under water. Think what that means. Where could



museum or circus. Before he could carry out his humane plan Nana died, presumably of a broken heart, for the autopsy failed to show any organic disease. Dr. Eschald—who can verify my statement—embalmed her, and when my friend returned to

must be remembered that Nana only half woman.

Nana is attracting considerable tention, and hundreds of people visiting the store every day to v the curiosity.

Travelers from the Orient say t

Plain Dealer, Ohio newspaper, September 13th 1908.

The West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879-1954), Saturday 30 March 1946, page 5

Strange "MONSTERS."

Australian Tigers, Bunyips, Sea-Serpents.

BY J. CROCKETT.

A contemporary illustration recording the appearance of a monster sea-serpent along the Atlantic coast in 1851. A horrific monster off the Australian coast was reported as far back as 1890.

HALF of Pennsylvania (U.S.A.) has been out hunting a strange monster which cries like a child, leaps 20 feet in the air and which is variously thought to be a panther or bear.

America, of course, has a few wild beasts of her own, including panthers and bears, but I'm willing to lay a ten to one bet that this "monster" turns out to be a house dog gone bush or something else, equally commonplace.

Our experience in Australia with "monsters," "lions" and "tigers" lures me into this apparent rashness. For 150 years we have been hunting "monsters," but none has ever been taken—to borrow from the wording of "Rewards"—alive or dead.

When a hunt has been successful, the "kill" has usually turned out to be in the nature of an anti-climax. Thus, the notorious Tantanoola tiger was shot and found to be a calf; the equally famous Coolac tiger changed mysteriously into a wild pig after it was shot; and the Riverina tiger somehow suffered a sea-change into a wild pig.

Tigers, lions, hippopotami, strange hybrid animals, bunyips and sea-serpents have all been sought at one time and another.

Dutch explorers started the vogue for tigers by claiming to have seen their tracks.

Hume's Hippo.

In 1821 Hamilton Hume, the explorer, said that he had seen a large animal, "something like a hippopotamus or a manatee," near Goulburn (N.S.W.). But although the Philosophical Society of Australasia offered Hume a reward for its capture, or failing that, its head, skin or bones, Hume could not find his hippo again. Nor could anyone else.

Hume's hippo points the moral for all these stories of mysterious "monsters." Invariably someone sees one. Then a lot of other people see the strange creature. Stimulated by this American report, I confidently expect a new hunt for a tiger to start up any day in Australia; our last "panther" was seen in 1940 near Mel-

.

Second half 19th Century.
16 woodcuts, printed in Turnhout
Permission *Koninklijke Bibliotheek The Hague, Het Geheugen van Nederland* Information provided by Loes Modderman 6 - 10 - 15

Lion, lioness, tiger, tigress, elephant, panther, bear,, African Barrabak , leopard (picture of horse-like animal) , East Indian animal, Laplander Camel, wolf, Rat of St Helena , hyena (leopard?) antelope (like a Kangaroo) , broadmuzzle pig.

Pictures and texts are not very truthful. With two-line rhyming subtitles in Dutch and French.

Omaha World Herald (Nebraska) March 23rd 1902